

Novels
OF
GEORGE
Du MAURIER

With the Original Illustrations

Trilby
The Martinis
Peter Abbotson

With Introductions by
JOHN MASEFIELD, O.M. & DAPHNE Du MAURIER

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INTRODUCTION TO PETER IBBETSON AND TRILBY

by JOHN MASEFIELD

The nineteenth century was a time of order, of thought, and of progress. The order had in it much that needed to be changed; the thought, in pointing-out the need of change, judged the order, with its religious and social beliefs, somewhat harshly; but the progress was very great, and the achievement often splendid. The industry which made prosperity gave leisure, and leisure, then, was very often given to study; it was a time of books.

Much of the reading was for refreshment, and this has been condemned, as though it were a waste of life to pass it delightfully. Very much of the reading was for knowledge in an infinite range of subject. Very much of the writing was speculative; it enquired into much that patient search might with glory learn.

One of the questions perplexing man has been that of the limitation of the mind. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, men were seeking to discover what limitations there were to the personal intellect; how far it could travel from its home, the personal brain; how deeply it could influence other minds at a distance from it, or near it; what limit, if any, there might be to an intense mental sympathy.

This enquiry occupied many doctors and scientists in various ways. It interested many millions of men and women. It stirred George du Maurier, the writer of the three novels *Peter Ibbetson*, *Trilby* and *The Martian*, to speculations which deeply delighted his generation.

When he began to write these tales, he was past the middle-age. He had written little, until then, save come playful verse. He was, of course, famous as the student and satirist of passing society, whose weekly drawing had long been the sought-for page in *Punch*.

Those many who remembered his early contributions to *Punch*, nearly thirty years before, must have regretted the passing of the lively fantasy which gave such mystery and fascination to page after page.

That fantasy was part of his nature, and remained with him, though the main effort of his working life made little use of it. All that power of very strange invention, so long unused, gathered power, and ripened within him, until an impulse called it into use.

In youth and early manhood, du Maurier must have been one of the Romantic School. Heaven lay about him in his infancy, and memories or dreams of it made his early work rich in suggestion.

Later, there came signs of strain, and of frustration. Certain chains were about him, certain duties of illusions checked his dreams and memories. The excitement and beauty of the child's daily life were dulled over, as with most of us, in the anxieties for daily bread. Though dulled over, that Spring is eternal in us, and often re-emerges with radiant power. The feeling French couplet

"Combien j'ai douce souvenance
Du joli lieu de ma naissance"

is, as it were, a chapter-heading to his tale. Was not that "douce souvenance" a memory of Heaven? Was not that childish time an exquisite reality of beauty and delight? What limitations are there to the personal memory? Might it not be possible, to re-enter that memory, to return into it, see it and hear it, and at last completely understand it? Might not this be a joy to many, a rapture to some, in a world not always glad?

The new mind is usually assailed with every venom. When du Maurier published *Peter Ibbetson*, he had been known as an artist for thirty years; his was not a new mind; and the book was not assailed; but perhaps it was imperfectly seen that the book was new; it was a discovery, a freshness, a thing till then unknown in our fiction.

Very few men, except perhaps those who treasured the early work in *Punch*, could have imagined that it was in him to write this book. After thirty years of playful jesting at some of the not very wise things in society, du Maurier discovered that he had not reached the limits of his personal intellect, that a gate had opened from his past into a future, and that beyond him lay a wonder not yet worked, not yet made known.

It is true that the possibilities of the imagination are endless and marvellous. There is, there can be, no limit to the variety, the strangeness or the beauty of an artist's glad invention. Yet every artist knows, how hard it is to find the way into that eternal store, and to live, even for a few days, in its light, on its abundance.

That du Maurier entered that store by any act of will is unlikely. Very long and patient toil at other things made the sudden access or entrance one of gladness, which lasted for a long time. Perhaps the long, patient toil, so often no doubt done against the grain, under grave and sad difficulties of light and sight, and against time, before the paper went to press, or the drawing had to go to the engraver, was of the nature of climbing a mountain, during which the climber sees only the rise in front of him, and on climbing it finds only another rise ahead, and beyond that, another and then another. Then, at some exhausted moment of breathlessness and hope, there may be nothing of the mountain left, only an amazing world perceived at once under the light, with such joy that life thereafter will be coloured and radiant from that moment, and every good mood referred to it in some measure.

I think that du Maurier must have met some such experience as

this; perhaps not in waking life, but in dream, or recurrent dream, and from the depth of the joy of the moment moved into the height of his power, and wrought from all his humanity work of very deep importance to his time. We who were young then could have dispensed with many of the then great writers, but without du Maurier life would have been bleak. He, and a few others, heightened the sense of life in us, and gave us something of beauty and of wonder, which the mind must ever hunger for.

When he had decided to write upon the theme of the influence of mind upon mind, of sympathy in its extreme between two spirits; of memory, unconsciously recorded, and of racial or family memory in mysterious ways transmitted, he met with the barrier to all these things, the exhausting activities of life, the work or interest which employs the waking mind, and the plays of passion which impede it. He was forced to seek a way round, and to put his two spirits in exceptional situations in which passion might have no play, and the separation of the two mortals be almost complete. He imagined two spirits of exceptional quality; but the man he numbed and made negative, thwarting him from the first, denying him all chance of a career, and thrusting him early and forever within a criminal lunatic asylum. In a way, the man who is made to tell the story adds very little to the partnership, except that he offers an exceptional opportunity to the woman, whose mind and sympathy are called upon to fill the starved life and complete it. The way in which she does this was a discovery of du Maurier's; it is a thing of romantic beauty, and the effect of it upon that generation was profound. Even now, after fifty years, I can think of no book which so startled and delighted the questing mind. Here was shewn something which made life more wonderful, more full of meaning, more glad with powers of sympathy. In those days, women were seldom found in the professions; they had no votes; and were but beginning to create their universities. It would be hard to find a book more certain to help the cause of women than this, in which the heroine by her activity and sympathy makes the life of the hero, and leaves the reader sure that what she achieved by "dreaming true" may be done by people with the right kind of will.

Probably, most of du Maurier's readers tried the method; and all of them, so far, must have failed, for no accounts of dreaming true have been published; it is not taught, it is not done. But of the countless experimenters, many must have had some strange experience, and learned a good deal of the influence of mind upon mind, in cases where there is a sympathy. Many have recognised the special power of women in mental partnerships of the kind.

The book is a complete statement of a destiny. It begins with suggestions from a far past, and ends with suggestions of a lasting future. In between these eternities are the lives on earth of hero and heroine, both in some measure thwarted as earthly lives, both amended and completed by inner lives of an intensity and interest

not before known. The lives of both are interrupted by sudden deaths and sorrows; one might call them fatal accidents. When these have fallen, both lives are flung asunder into other sorrows, so that their re-uniting may come when it is most dearly to be loved.

It may not occur to many that one very great reason for the deep power of the book on young men was the study of the lonely life of a young man in the London of the early nineties. Peter Ibbetson, living alone, or with a dog, in lodgings in Pentonville, in want of companions, amusements, arts, knowledges, interests and foreign travel, lives the life and suffers the anguish of some half million of young men then in the London area. There was a free Sunday, then as now, but what could be done on Sunday save walk to Hampstead, and what could be done when there, save walk, and walk back? "Hampstead was not bad", he writes. As in *Punch*, the book has one drawing which shows that Hampstead was not bad.

Trilby followed *Peter Ibbetson* some years later. It was much more dearly loved than *Peter Ibbetson*. It was loved here in England, but in the United States it became more dearly loved and more widely noted and quoted than any book published in my life-time. I have seen collars named after famous actors, and even fishing-rods named after a famous playwright; but I well remember hats, boots, shoes, collars, toothpastes, coats, soaps, songs and dances named after *Trilby*. . . . For many years, the *Trilby* hat was known to men. It persists still as a hat, but it is no longer known as the *Trilby*. Even the human foot is now called a foot. One very charming result was, that the book called back into popularity the pretty sentimental song of *Ben Bolt*, whose old author (T. D. English), shared in the glory. *Ben Bolt* was played "on every barrel-organ and by every German Band" till it was the best known tune in the New World.

A tale so charming could not fail to win many readers. It is said, that the author was much affected by the praise poured upon him from all over the world. It surprised and startled him, that so many loved it. The world was waiting for a book of the kind; it had been fed on other meats too long; this new thing was exactly the book for those waiting thousands.

The scene is laid in the Quartier Latin of Paris. This, in itself, won the hearts of those who cared for the arts. France, then, was the living influence in writing and painting; the Quartier was the world's intellectual capital.

The tale deals with the friendship of three painters, who share a studio, and have the comradeship of the arts. This won all youth everywhere, for youth lives in comradeship, and plays at the arts, even if it never works at them. The three come to know and to love a charming artist's model, *Trilby*, the heroine, whose gaiety and goodness made the heart of the world beat more tenderly for years to come.

To these winning elements, du Maurier added the bold speculation of his mind, the possibility of an artist being able by force of will

or intellect to utter his art, of whatever kind, through the talent of another. Trilby, who is tone-deaf, and unable to sing in tune, has a voice of all the qualities. She cannot sing; but the villain of the book, an unpleasant musician, who has, as it were, the perfection of song within his soul, can hypnotise her, and then direct her voice into the perfection of singing. When hypnotised, she sings as no human being has ever sung. Then, the link is snapped; the hypnotiser dies; Trilby, for a little, sees her old friends again; and is then, seemingly, called into death by her hypnotiser.

The book ends with much romantic tenderness, with gentlest memories of old affection, with a lessening of all the strains, and allaying of griefs. The world longed for a book of the kind. No book published in my life-time has so won the world. I read it soon after it was published, when the praise was already great. I cannot forget the intense new delight the story gave to me. Here (as I thought) was the romance for which the world was longing, while writers were astray, some in salons, some in cow-byres, disputing about method, and the duty of the artist.

The world of more than fifty years ago did not question the book very closely. Some cavilled at this or that; on the whole, it was accepted with such fervour of delight and gratitude that any blame seemed out of place.

The late Victorian time was a great time, with standards now mostly gone, with tendernesses and prejudices now forgotten (if not mocked at) and with a working social structure of which few young people now can have any knowledge or clear view. Du Maurier in his youth knew intimately the very different social structure of the France which had known some eight or nine upheavals in fifty years; a France in which certain prejudices did not exist; a land, moreover, in which the word artist means a rare being, devoted to a calling which all men honour.

In the early part of the tale, the life and point of view are French and natural and happy. The sorrow, frustration and ruin in the book begins when the social prejudice of another land interferes, discourages and forbids. Such prejudice is probably now gone. It existed when the book appeared; and was accepted, by that decade of readers, as the thing which would have checked Trilby's marriage with the hero.

Some have felt that the hero is somewhat too sensitive for a young healthy Englishman; he drops a tender tear too readily. You must remember that du Maurier was writing about a young Englishman who had not been through any pattern-making public school, but had been brought up by tutor and mother, with all his unusual tenderness, as an exceptional artist, untoughened and untanned. Like very many who admire France, du Maurier may have wondered sometimes whether rather more home-life in you might not give our people a rather greater tenderness, a wider and more living sympathy.

These two books meant very much to us who were young then; no books meant more. I shall never forget the anguish I felt, when I read, in a far distant land, that du Maurier had died. I had hoped that I might some day be in London, able to come some day to a watching place near his door, and if very very lucky, perhaps see him come out, the very man, the head that planned the books, the hand that wrote and illustrated them.

That happiness was not to be mine; but many, many times I have gone past his Hampstead grave, and by the house in which he lived so long, and never by either without a gratitude not easily to be told. Sometimes, I wonder whether any author has given me greater gladness or companions dearer to my heart.

INTRODUCTION TO THE MARTIAN

by D. DU MAURIER

George du Maurier, "Kicky" to his family and his friends, was born in Paris on the 6th of January, 1834. His father, Louis-Maturin Busson du Maurier, was the son of emigrés who had left France during the Terror and then returned to it again. His mother, Ellen Clarke, was the daughter of the notorious Mary Ann Clarke, one-time mistress of the Duke of York. Louis-Maturin was one of those charming, lovable, artistic men possessing a spark of genius that never becomes anything more than a spark: he sang like an angel, but unfortunately only in his bath, his voice not being strong enough for stage or opera; he invented wonderful and rare machines, which because of some flaw or other failed to work, and once nearly blew his family into the next world; he had a wizard's flair for speculation which just missed amassing him a fortune by the proverbial hair's breadth. Too proud, and possibly too delightfully inefficient to earn his own living, he was content to borrow money from those who were fond enough of him to lend it, and when friends proved difficult there was always his wife's annuity—hush-money from the Duke of York.

Ellen Clarke was very different from her husband. Possibly it was not much fun being the daughter of a woman who had been imprisoned in Newgate and lampooned in the streets of London; the experience had left her caustic and a little sour. But she was devoted to her impecunious Louis-Maturin, even though at times he sorely tried her patience, and she fussed and worried over her children with all the singleness of purpose and forethought for their future that comes with deep-laid anxiety — the children *must* do well in the world, especially her favourite Kicky — and therefore atone in some measure for the disappointments of her own life. Kicky was a happy little boy — or so he imagined, when fifty years later he wrote about his childhood — and the scents and sounds of that pre-imperial Paris, the rumble of wheels on cobbled stones, the crack of a whip, the white dust at the corner of the rue de la Pompe, the chestnut trees in flower, even the smell of burnt bread, black coffee, and tobacco on the warm spring air, comes floating up from the pages of *Peter Ibbetson*, *Trilby* and *The Martian*, proving very possibly, as Kicky himself believed, that nothing is ever forgotten that we have known and experienced and seen, but all images are printed in our sub-conscious minds like photographs.

Kicky was educated in Paris, at the same "Institution", that he describes in *The Martian*, and having failed for his "baccalauréat", he crossed over to London in 1851, preceded by his family (Louis-Maturin having new and wonderful ideas for making a

fortune) and began to study chemistry, for which he had not the slightest aptitude. The happy child had grown into a thin rather wistful young man, forever drawing the heads of beautiful young women on the backs of envelopes, and he might have developed into just such another dreamer as his father had not the latter suddenly died in 1856, leaving Kicky at twenty-two without a penny in the world but what he could make himself, the hope of his widowed mother, and his younger brother and sister. After some argument, Kicky persuaded Ellen to allow him to go to Paris and study art, and for the next two years, like Little Billee in *Trilby*, and like Barty Josselin in *The Martian*, he lived the care-free happy-go-lucky life of the Quartier Latin.

It was during this time, when he was working in the studio of van Lerius at Antwerp, that he began to lose the sight of his left eye. The whole tragedy is described in great detail in *The Martian*. Life lost its gaiety, and became pregnant with anxiety. He wandered about Belgium thin, bitter, and very miserable, until his mother and sister came out to dreary Malines to look after him. For a time it was feared that his right eye would go too, but this double disaster never came upon him, though the dread of it remained a menace to the end of his days. His left eye was gone, though, and forever. Kicky would never become a great painter now. But he was not defeated. He continued drawing in black and white, and when somebody sent him a copy of *Punch's Almanac* from England, he decided that his talent lay in this direction, and that he might possibly make a name for himself as a humorous draughtsman, and as an illustrator to more serious publications. He returned to London in 1860, got an introduction to Mark Lemon, the editor of *Punch*, and soon after sketches began to appear week by week in the new and famous *Punch*, with the initials "du M" in the lower left-hand corner. It is difficult for us to realise now, in 1947, what *Punch* meant to the social world of the sixties, seventies, and eighties. To-day, the paper is an institution, whose pages are too often turned with a yawn in the dentist's waiting-room, and quickly laid aside for Hot News from Hollywood. But in Kicky's day there was no weekly periodical that came near to touching *Punch*. It was pungent with satire, redolent with wit, smooth with a kind of glistening mockery.

People waited impatiently for the weekly *Punch* to appear as to-day they wait for — nothing. If you did not read *Punch* you were a Philistine, you were finished, you did not exist. And very soon those graceful drawings with "du M" in the lower left-hand corner became the best-known page in the paper. So the time of waiting was over. Kicky had arrived. Doubts of success, financial worries, ill-health and loneliness, belonged to the past. In 1862 he married Emma Wightwick, whom he had seen several years before as a dark and handsome schoolgirl (see again *The Martian*), founded a family of five, and like the story-books of yesterday but never of to-day, lived happily ever after.

The studio of his home, New Grove House, at Hampstead, became the centre of his world. Here he would blink away at his easel, smoking his innumerable black cigars, with his great St. Bernard dog Chang stretched at his feet beside him; his devoted wife hovered at his elbow, a couple of daughters practised at the piano, singing the French songs he had taught them, a son stood on the dais as model, and the two youngest children dressed up as nigger minstrels to "make Pappa laugh". Kicky never slept a night away from his wife and children in the whole of his married life. When he went on holiday to Dieppe or to Whitby, the family went too — a great retinue of children, dogs, birds, nurses — he could not bear to be parted from any of them.

He enjoyed the weekly *Punch* dinners, he liked to dine in London with his friends and to hear music, but best of all he liked to sit by his own fire-side, with his wife in the chair opposite, and for her to read aloud to him. It was not until the last years of his life that he wrote his three novels. That *Peter Ibbetson* and *Trilby* were instant successes, and indeed the first of the modern so-called "best sellers", was something of a surprise to him. He was pleased of course, but a little embarrassed too. There was something rather vulgar about strangers asking for interviews, and Americans writing for his autograph. He did not want to go on lecture tours — he wanted to stay in his beloved studio, amongst his own family.

And because he was tired, and a little weary of it all, and did not feel well enough to go out and about very much, he began to think back into the past again, as he had done before writing *Peter Ibbetson*, and all that he had ever thought, and all that he had ever done, and all that he ever wished he could have been, poured from him into words on paper, tumbling over themselves in a medley of confusion — and the result was *The Martian*. The book is not a novel. It is, in point of fact, the autobiography of George du Maurier — with one difference. And the difference is that Barty Josselin, the hero of *The Martian*, is the man that George du Maurier, in his secret heart, longed to have been.

Kicky was small of stature, brown-haired, and un-remarkable; Barty Josselin was a broadshouldered giant, (*Peter Ibbetson* again) a golden-haired Greek god. Kicky came of bourgeois parentage; Barty Josselin was the illicit offspring of a passionate love affair between an English Duke and a beautiful French maiden. Kicky was shy at school, and diffident; Barty Josselin was the darling of master and boy alike, adored by all who knew him. Kicky struggled to learn chemistry and failed; Barty Josselin went in to the Guards, and had the whole of London at his feet. Kicky could not tie up a parcel without fumbling with the string, Barty Josselin fought duels, boxed bargees, and had lovely Society women on their knees to marry him. What might-have-been, thought Kicky at sixty years, sitting back in his arm-chair in the studio at New Grove house, but what in truth was not; and so sighing and forgetting the Guards-

man of his imagination, he went on to write about what really happened. Paris and Belgium, going blind, and coming to London, and marrying Pern, and having the children — there was not really very much to tell. But one incident recalled another, and this memory gave birth to that forgotten thought, and there they were before him, the little follies, the little dreams, the little longings of fifty years. But Barty Josselin, the wonderful Barty Josselin whom he had never become, must not write a vulgar best-seller like *Trilby*. He wrote a series of books that changed the world. He made wars impossible, cruelty a forgotten instinct, death something no longer to be feared. And though a faithful loving husband, like Kicky, and a devoted father, like Kicky, Barty Josselin possessed someone else besides, even as Peter Ibbetson possessed his Duchess of Towers. Barty Josselin was loved and protected and guided from his earliest infancy by the spirit of a woman who had never been born upon this earth — by the Martian of the story. It was the Martian who taught him to draw, who wrote his books, who controlled his life, who lived in his brain and in his heart. And because the Martian loved him so truly and so well, she came to life, in the end, in the person of Barty Josselin's youngest daughter, the Marty of the book.

Where was Kicky's imagination leading him now? No one was ever quite certain of the answer. The Josselin children were the young du Mauriers, and Marty with her boyish ways, her striped skirt, her fisherman's cap on the back of her head, and her passion for making up stories about shipwrecks, was undoubtedly May, Kicky's favourite child.

But the story ends suddenly — on a note of tragedy. Early death for all is the only way out for the writer who can think of no other ending to his tale. And Kicky was tired, he had written so many thousands of words for May to copy out in her careful handwriting, there was really nothing more to say. His cough was troubling him — too many black cigars — and he had a pain under his heart. So when the proofs of *The Martian* came to be corrected Kicky was no longer there to read them. Like Barty Josselin he was no more. He had died on the 3th of October, and was lying in Hampstead churchyard. On his grave were written the lines he had translated from the French:

"A little trust that when we die,
We reap our sowing — and so good-bye."

The Martian was therefore published some months after his death, and it won none of the popularity of *Peter Ibbetson* or *Trilby*.

People found it tedious, as indeed it is in many places, and too full of anecdotes, and little unimportant happenings that have no bearing on the main thread of the story. And surely, they said with a yawn, this idea of a man's mind being controlled by a woman who lived in Mars was too much for anyone to swallow. Perhaps it was. And perhaps today in 1947 the tale will find even fewer readers than it

did originally in 1897. But those few who do read *The Martian*, and persevere until the end, will close the book with a strange half wistful feeling of regret. For exhausting as the style is, and garrulous, and over-written, yet the pages bring to the discerning reader what Kicky felt so deeply within himself — an almost unbearable nostalgia for the past. He was a happy man, a successful man, with many friends and a devoted family, but the memory of his own youth, of what had been and could never come again, filled him with yearning, with a sense of sweet yet aching melancholy. The days that are no more. . . . To us who wend our weary way through the atomic forties of the present century, the eighteen-forties glow with incandescent light. The France of Kicky's youth is not the France of to-day, or even the France we knew ten, twenty years ago.

Gone are the workmen in their blouses, the little boys in sabots, the fiacres clopping along the cobbled streets. And vanished too is the leisured life of Kicky's London, the gay painted window boxes in spring, the jingle of the hansom cab, the slow plodding horsebus down empty Regent Street, the quiet rustle of a woman's gown sweeping the drawing-room floor.

Some fourteen years ago the writer of this introduction wrote more fully about Kicky and his days, and about Kicky's son Gerald, and risking repetition once again, will conclude with a quotation from what biography, which in a sense was but an off-shoot of *The Martian*. "For all his eye worry and consequent mental anxiety there was a sense of tranquillity and peace possessed by Kicky and his generation that those who came after him would never know. He belonged to that age of sublime security, when the present appeared enduring and the future held no fears. Time was not an enemy then, faith was not lost, nor belief in mankind; and men and women trusted one another.

"The countryside was not desecrated, nor had turmoil come to the streets of London. Gossip was amusing and occasionally malicious, but there was no breath of slander, no interminable plunging into the privacy of others. Voices were softer; the nasal twang and the high-pitched cackle were not yet born. Women knew how to listen, how to be motionless; they has not yet learnt stridency and restlessness. Even the gowns they wore were not impersonal, but belonged in some unmistakable way to the wearer, impregnated with her individuality; her body bearing forever the odour of unscented soap, rainwater, and sweet lavender.

"The men of Kicky's day respected their women, courted them, and won them. They lay side by side at night; they confessed their little hopes and fears and looked forward calmly to another day. Not for them the hunger before dawn, the doubting hours of midnight, the ever-present fear of the future and the shadow of insecurity; worries about money, worries about plans; the very uncertainty of life itself, born from the horrors of wars. Kicky was blessed in his generation. He enjoyed great beauty, and was spared much pain.

Patience was his, and dignity, and quiet kindliness. They had strength, the men and woman of his time, but their fortitude was untried, and of another kind. The burdens they carried were cast in a different mould. Their sorrows and their joys were personal, were familiar; the little occurrences of day to day. No universal hunger bore them down; they trod their prosperous paths with measured steps, untroubled and serene, trailing a bright unfevered gaiety; smiling with God as their sons would never smile."

PETER IBBETSON

*

PART FIRST

INTRODUCTION

THE writer of this singular autobiography was my cousin, who died at the — Criminal Lunatic Asylum, of which he had been an inmate three years.

He had been removed thither after a sudden and violent attack of homicidal mania (which fortunately led to no serious consequences) from — Jail, where he had spent twenty-five years, having been condemned to penal servitude for life, for the murder of — —, his relative.

He had been originally sentenced to death.

It was at — Lunatic Asylum that he wrote these memoirs, and I received the MS. soon after his decease, with the most touching letter, appealing to our early friendship, and appointing me his literary executrix.

It was his wish that the story of his life should be published just as he had written it.

I have found it unadvisable to do this. It would revive, to no useful purpose, an old scandal, long buried and forgotten, and thereby give pain or annoyance to people who are still alive.

Nor does his memory require rehabilitation among those who knew him, or knew anything of him—the only people really concerned. His dreadful deed has long been condoned by all (and they are many) who knew the provocation he had received and the character of the man who had provoked him.

On mature consideration, and with advice, I resolved (in order that his dying wishes should not be frustrated altogether) to publish the memoir with certain alterations and emendations.

I have nearly everywhere changed the names of people and places; suppressed certain details, and omitted some passages of his life (most of the story of his schooldays, for instance, and that of his brief career as a private in the Horse Guards) lest they should too easily lead to the identification and annoyance of people still alive, for he is strongly personal at times, and perhaps not always just; and some other events I have carefully paraphrased (notably his trial at the Old Bailey), and given for them as careful an equivalent as I could manage without too great a loss of verisimilitude.

I may as well state at once that, allowing for these alterations, every incident of his *natural* life as described by himself is absolutely true, to the minutest detail, as I have been able to ascertain.

For the early part of it—the life at Passy he describes with such affection—I can vouch personally; I am the Cousin "Madge" to whom he once or twice refers.

I well remember the genial abode where he lived with his parents (my dear uncle and aunt), and the lovely "Madame Seraskier," and her husband and daughter, and their house, "Parva sed Apta," and "Major Duquesnois," and the rest.

And although I have never seen him since he was twelve years old, when his parents died and he went to London (as most of my life has been spent abroad), I received occasional letters from him.

I have also been able to obtain much information about him from others, especially from a relative of the late "Mr. and Mrs. Lintot," who knew him well, and from several officers in his regiment who remembered him; also from the "Vicar's daughter," whom he met at "Lady Cray's," and who perfectly recollects the conversation she had with him at dinner, his sudden indisposition, and his long interview with the "Duchess of Towers," under the ash-tree next morning; she was one of the croquet players.

He was the most beautiful boy I ever saw, and so charming, lively, and amiable that everybody was fond of him. He had a horror of cruelty, especially to animals (quite singular in a boy of his age), and was very truthful and brave.

According to all accounts (and from a photograph in my possession) he grew up to be as handsome as a man can well be, a personal gift which he seems to have held of no account whatever, though he thought so much of it in others. But he also became singularly shy and reserved in manner, over-diffident and self-distrustful; of a melancholy disposition, loving solitude, living much alone, and taking nobody into his confidence, and yet inspiring both affection and respect. For he seems to have always been thoroughly gentleman-like in speech, bearing, manner, and aspect.

It is possible, although he does not say so, that having first enlisted, and then entered upon a professional career under somewhat inauspicious conditions, he felt himself to have fallen away from the social rank (such as it was) that belonged to him by birth; and he may have found his associates uncongenial.

His old letters to me are charmingly open and effusive.

Of the lady whom (keeping her title and altering her name) I have called the "Duchess of Towers," I find it difficult to speak. That they only met twice, and in the way he describes, is a fact about which there can be no doubt.

It is also indubitable that he received in Newgate, on the morning after his sentence to death, an envelope containing violets, and the strange message he mentions. Both letter and violets are in my possession, and the words are in her handwriting; about that there can be no mistake.

It is certain, moreover, that she separated from her husband almost immediately after my cousin's trial and condemnation, and lived in comparative retirement from the world, as it is certain that he went suddenly mad twenty-five years later, in — Jail,

a few hours after her tragic death, and before he could possibly have heard of it by the ordinary channels; and that he was sent to — Asylum, where, after his frenzy had subsided, he remained for many days in a state of suicidal melancholia, until, to the surprise of all, he rose one morning in high spirits, and apparently cured of all serious symptoms of insanity; so he remained until his death. It was during the last year of his life that he wrote his autobiography, in French and English.

There is nothing to be surprised at, taking all the circumstances into consideration, that even so great a lady, the friend of queens and empresses, the bearer of a high title and an illustrious name, justly celebrated for her beauty and charm (and her endless charities), of blameless repute, and one of the most popular women in English society, should yet have conceived a very warm regard for my poor cousin; indeed, it was an open secret in the family of "Lord Cray" that she had done so. But for them she would have taken the whole world into her confidence.

After her death she left him what money had come to her from her father, which he disposed of for charitable ends, and an immense quantity of MS. in cipher—a cipher which is evidently identical with that he used himself in the annotations he put under innumerable sketches he was allowed to make during his long period of confinement, which (through her interest, and no doubt through his own good conduct) was rendered as bearable to him as possible. These sketches (which are very extraordinary) and her Grace's MS. are now in my possession.

They constitute a mystery into which I have not dared to pry.

From papers belonging to both I have been able to establish beyond doubt the fact (so strangely discovered) of their descent from a common French ancestress, whose name I have but slightly modified, and the tradition of whom still lingers in the "Département de la Sarthe," where she was a famous person a century ago; and her violin, a valuable Amati, now belongs to me.

Of the non-natural part of his story I will not say much.

It is, of course, a fact that he had been absolutely and, to all appearance, incurably insane before he wrote his life.

There seems to have been a difference of opinion, or rather a doubt, among the authorities of the asylum as to whether he was mad after the acute but very violent period of his brief attack had ended.

Whichever may have been the case, I am at least convinced of this: that he was no romancer, and thoroughly believed in the extraordinary mental experience he has revealed.

At the risk of being thought to share his madness—if he *was* mad—I will conclude by saying that I, for one, believe him to have been sane, and to have told the truth all through.

MADGE PLUNKET.

I am but a poor scribe, ill versed in the craft of wielding words and phrases, as the cultivated reader (if I should ever happen to have one) will no doubt very soon find out for himself.

I have been for many years an object of pity and contempt to all who ever gave me a thought—to all but *one*! Yet of all that ever lived on this earth I have been, perhaps, the happiest and most privileged, as that reader will discover if he perseveres to the end.

My outer and my inner life have been as the very poles—asunder; and if, at the eleventh hour, I have made up my mind to give my story to the world, it is not in order to rehabilitate myself in the eyes of my fellowmen, deeply as I value their good opinion; for I have always loved them and wished them well, and would fain express my goodwill and win theirs, if that were possible.

It is because the regions where I have found my felicity are accessible to all, and that many, better trained and better gifted, will explore them to far better purpose than I, and to the greater glory and benefit of mankind, when once I have given them the clue. Before I can do this, and in order to show how I came by this clue myself, I must tell, as well as I may, the tale of my checkered career—in telling which, moreover, I am obeying the last behest of one whose lightest wish was my law.

If I am more prolix than I need be, it must be set down to my want of experience in the art of literary composition—to a natural wish I have to show myself neither better nor worse than I believe myself to be; to the charm, the unspeakable charm, that personal reminiscences have for the person principally concerned, and which he cannot hope to impart, however keenly he may feel it, without gifts and advantages that have been denied to me.

And this leads me to apologise for the egotism of this Memoir, which is but an introduction to another and longer one that I hope to publish later. To write a story of paramount importance to mankind, it is true, but all about one's outer and one's inner self, to do this without seeming somewhat egotistical, requires something akin to genius—and I am but a poor scribe.

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"Combien j'ai douce souvenance
Du joli lieu de ma naissance!"

These quaint lines have been running in my head at intervals through nearly all my outer life, like an oft-recurring burden in an endless ballad—sadly monotonous, alas! the ballad, which is mine; sweetly monotonous the burden, which is by Châteaubriand.

I sometimes think that to feel the full significance of this refrain one must have passed one's childhood in sunny France, where it was written, and the remainder of one's existence in mere London—or worse than mere London—as has been the case with me. If I had spent all my life from infancy upward in Bloomsbury, or Clerkenwell, or Whitechapel, my early days would be shorn

of much of their retrospective glamour as I look back on them in these my after-years.

"Combien j'ai douce souvenance!"

It was on a beautiful June morning in a charming French garden, where the warm, sweet atmosphere was laden with the scent of lilac and syringa, and gay with butterflies and dragonflies and humble-bees, that I began my conscious existence with the happiest day of all my outer life.

It is true that I had vague memories (with many a blank between) of a dingy house in the heart of London, in a long street of desolating straightness, that led to a dreary square and back again, and nowhere else for me; and then of a troubled and exciting journey that seemed of jumbled days and nights. I could recall the blue stage-coach with the four tall, thin, brown horses, so quiet and modest and well-behaved; the red-coated guard and his horn; the redfaced driver and his husky voice and many capes. Then the steamer with its glistening deck, so beautiful and white, it seemed quite a desecration to walk upon it—this spotlessness did not last very long; and then two wooden piers with a lighthouse on each, and a quay, and blue-bloused workmen and red-legged little soldiers with mustaches, and bare-legged fisherwomen, all speaking a language that I knew as well as the other commoner language I had left behind; but which I had always looked upon as an exclusive possession of my father's and mother's and mine for the exchange of sweet confidence and the bewilderment of outsiders; and here were little boys and girls in the street, quite common children, who spoke it as well and better than I did myself.

After this came the dream of a strange, huge, topheavy vehicle, that seemed like three yellow carriages stuck together, and a mountain of luggage at the top under an immense black tarpaulin, which ended in a hood; and beneath the hood sat a blue-bloused man with a singular ~~cap~~ like a concertina, and mustaches, who cracked a loud whip over five squealing, fussy, pugnacious white and gray horses, with bells on their necks and bushy fox-tails on their foreheads, and their own tails carefully tucked up behind.

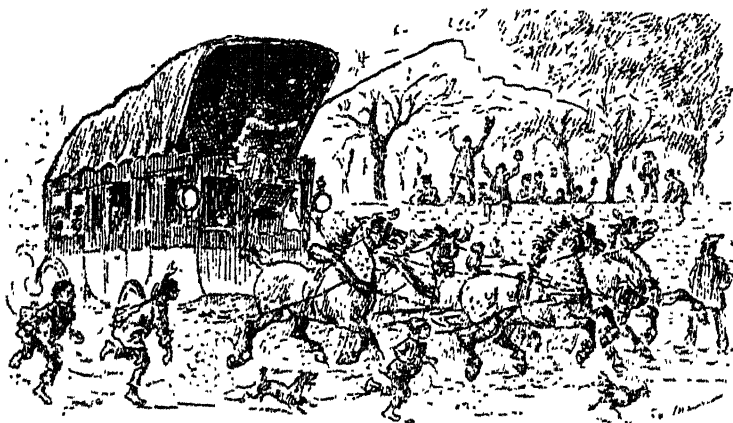
From the *coupé* where I sat with my father and mother I could watch them well as they led us through dusty roads with endless apple-trees or poplars on either side. Little bare-footed urchins (whose papas and mammas wore wooden shoes and funny white nightcaps) ran after us for French halfpennies, which were larger than English ones, and pleasanter to have and to hold. Up hill and down we went; over sounding wooden bridges, through roughly paved streets in pretty towns to large courtyards, where five other quarrelsome steeds, gray and white, were waiting to take the place of the old ones—worn out, but quarrelling still!

And through the night I could hear the gay music of the bells and hoofs, the rumbling of the wheels, the cracking of the eternal

whip, as I fidgeted from one familiar lap to the other in search of sleep; and waking out of a doze I could see the glare of the red lamps on the five straining white and gray backs that dragged us so gallantly through the dark summer night.

Then it all became rather tiresome and intermittent and confused, till we reached at dusk next day a quay by a broad river; and as we drove along it, under thick trees, we met other red and blue and green lamped, five-horsed diligences starting on their long journey just as ours was coming to an end.

Then I knew (because I was a well-educated little boy, and



"A STRANGE, HUGE, TOP-HEAVY VEHICLE."

heard my father exclaim, "Here's Paris at last!") that we had entered the capital of France—a fact that impressed me very much—so much, it seems, that I went to sleep for thirty-six hours at a stretch, and woke up to find myself in the garden I have mentioned, and to retain possession of that self without break or solution of continuity (except when I went to sleep again) until now.

The happiest day in all my outer life!

For in an old shed full of tools and lumber, at the end of the garden, and half-way between an empty fowl-house and a disused stable (each an Eden in itself), I found a small toy wheelbarrow—quite the most extraordinary, the most unheard-of and undreamed-of, humorously, daintily, exquisitely fascinating object I had ever come across in all my brief existence.

I spent hours—enchanted hours—in wheeling brick-bats from the stable to the fowl-house, and more enchanted hours in wheeling them all back again, while genial French workmen, who were busy in and out of the house where we were to live, stopped every

now and then to ask good-natured questions of the "p'tit Anglais," and commend his knowledge of their tongue, and his remarkable skill in the management of a wheelbarrow. Well I remember wondering, with newly aroused self-consciousness, at the intensity, the poignancy, the extremity of my bliss, and looking forward with happy confidence to an endless succession of such hours in the future.

But next morning, though the weather was as fine, and the



LE P'TIT ANGLAIS.

wheelbarrow and the brick-bats and the genial workmen were there, and all the scents and sights and sounds were the same, the first fine careless rapture was not to be caught again, and the glory and the freshness had departed.

Thus did I, on the very dawning of life, reach at a single tide the high-water mark of my earthly bliss—never to be reached again by me on this side of the ivory gate—and discover that to make the perfection of human happiness endure there must be something more than a sweet French garden, a small French wheelbarrow, and a nice little English boy who spoke French and had the love of approbation—a fourth dimension is required.

I found it in due time.

But if there were no more enchanted hours like the first, there

were to be seven happy years that have the quality of enchantment as I look back on them.

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Oh, the beautiful garden! Roses, nasturtiums, and convolvulus, wall-flowers, sweet-peas, and carnations, marigolds and sunflowers, dahlias and pansies, and hollyhocks, and poppies, and Heaven knows what besides! In my fond recollection they all bloom at once, irrespective of time and season.

To see and smell and pick all these for the first time at the susceptible age of five! To inherit such a kingdom after five years of Gower Street and Bedford Square! For all things are relative, and everything depends upon the point of view. To the owner of Chatsworth (and to his gardeners) my beautiful French garden would have seemed a small affair.

And what a world of insects—Chatsworth could not beat *these* (indeed is, no doubt, sadly lacking in them!)—beautiful, interesting, comic, grotesque, and terrible; from the proud humble-bee to the earwig and his cousin the devil's coach-horse; and all those rampant, many-footed things that pullulate in damp and darkness under big flat stones. To think that I have been friends with all these—roses and centipedes and all—and then to think that most of my outer life has been spent between bare whitewashed walls, with never even a flea or a spider to be friends with again!

Our house (where, by the way, I had been born five years before), an old yellow house, with green shutters and Mansard roofs of slate, stood between this garden and the street—a long winding street, roughly flagged, with oil lamps suspended across at long intervals; these lamps were let down with pulleys at dusk, replenished and lit, and then hauled up again, to make darkness visible for a few hours on nights when the moon was away.

Opposite to us was a boys' school—"Maison d'Éducation, Dirigée par M. Jules Saindou, Bachelier et Maître ès Lettres et ès Sciences," and author of a treatise on geology, with such hauntingly terrific pictures of antediluvian reptiles battling in the primeval slime that I have never been able to forget them. My father, who was fond of science, made me a present of it on my sixth birthday. It cost me many a nightmare.

From our windows we could see and hear the boys at play—at a proper distance French boys sound just like English ones, though they do not look so, on account of their blue blouses and dusky cropped heads—and we could see the gymnastic fixtures in the playground, M. Saindou's pride. "Le portique! la poutre!! le cheval!!! et les barres parallèles!!!!" Thus they were described in M. Saindou's prospectus.

On either side of the street (which was called "the Street of the Pump"), as far as eye could reach looking west, were dwelling-houses just like our own, only agreeably different; and garden

walls overtopped with the foliage of horse-chestnut, sycamore, acacia, and lime; and here and there huge portals and iron gates defended by posts of stone gave ingress to mysterious abodes of brick and plaster and granite, many-shuttered, and embosomed in sun-shot greenery.

Looking east, one could see in the near distance unsophisticated shops, with old-fashioned windows of many panes—Liard, the grocer; Corbin, the poulterer; the butcher, the baker, the candle-stick-maker.

And this delightful street, as it went on its winding way, led not to Bedford Square or the new University College Hospital, but to Paris through the Arc de Triomphe at one end, and to the river Seine at the other; or else, turning to the right, to St. Cloud through the Bois de Boulogne of Louis Philippe Premier, Roi des Français—as different from the Paris and the Bois de Boulogne of to-day as a diligence from an express train.

On one side of the beautiful garden was another beautiful garden, separated from ours by a high wall covered with peach and pear and plum and apricot trees; on the other, accessible to us through a small door in another lower wall clothed with jasmine, clematis, convolvulus, and nasturtium, was a long straight avenue of almond-trees, acacia, laburnum, lilac, and may, so closely planted that the ivy-grown walls on either side could scarcely be seen. What lovely patches they made on the ground when the sun shone! One end of this abutted on "the Street of the Pump," from which it was fenced by tall, elaborately carved iron gates between stone portals, and at the side was a "porte bâtarde," guarded by le Père et la Mère François, the old concierge and his old wife. Peace to their ashes, and Heaven rest their kindly, genial souls!

The other end of the avenue, where there was also an iron gate, admitted to a large private park that seemed to belong to nobody, and of which we were free—a very wilderness of delight, a heaven, a terror of tangled thickets and not too dangerous chalk cliffs, disused old quarries, and dark caverns, prairies of lush grass, sedgy pools, turnip fields, forests of pine, groves and avenues of horse-chestnut, dank valleys of walnut-trees and hawthorn, which summer made dark at noon; bare, wind-swept, mountainous regions whence one could reconnoitre afar; all sorts of wild and fearsome places for savages and wild beasts to hide and small boys to roam quite safely in quest of perilous adventure.

All this vast enclosure (full of strange singing, humming, whistling, buzzing, twittering, cooing, booming, croaking, flying, creeping, crawling, jumping, climbing, burrowing, splashing, diving things) had been neglected for ages—an Eden where one might gather and eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge without fear, and learn lovingly the ways of life without losing one's innocence; a forest that had remade for itself a new virginity, and become primeval once more; where beautiful Nature had reasserted her own sweet

will, and massed and tangled everything together as though a Beauty had been sleeping there undisturbed for close on a hundred years, and was only waiting for the charming Prince—or, as it turned out a few years later, alas! the speculative builder and the railway engineer—those princes of our day.

My fond remembrance would tell me that this region was almost boundless, well as I remember its boundaries. My knowledge of physical geography, as applied to this particular suburb of Paris, bids me assign more modest limits to this earthly paradise, which again was separated by an easily surmounted fence from Louis Philippe's Bois de Boulogne; and to this I cannot find it in my heart to assign any limits whatever, except the pretty old town from which it takes its name, and whose principal street leads to that magical combination of river, bridge, palace, gardens, mountain, and forest, St. Cloud.

What more could be wanted for a small boy fresh (if such be freshness) from the very heart of Bloomsbury?

That not a single drop should be lacking to the full cup of that small boy's felicity, there was a pond on the way from Passy to St. Cloud, a memorable pond, called "La Mare d'Auteuil," the sole aquatic treasure that Louis Philippe's Bois de Boulogne could boast. For in those ingenuous days there existed no artificial lake fed by an artificial stream, no pré-Catelan, no Jardin d'Acclimatation. The wood was just a wood, and nothing more—a dense, wild wood, that covered many hundreds of acres, and sheltered many thousands of wild live things. Though mysteriously deep in the middle, this famous pond (which may have been centuries old, and still exists) was not large; you might almost fling a stone across it anywhere.

Bounded on three sides by the forest (now shorn away), it was just hidden from the dusty road by a fringe of trees; and one could have it all to one's self, except on Sunday and Thursday afternoons, when a few lovesick Parisians remembered its existence, and in its loveliness forgot their own.

To be there at all was to be happy; for not only was it quite the most secluded, picturesque, and beautiful pond in all the habitable globe—that pond of ponds, the *only* pond—but it teemed with a far greater number and variety of wonderful insects and reptiles than any other in the world. Such, at least, I believed must be the case, for they were endless.

To watch these creatures, to learn their ways, to catch them (which we sometimes did), to take them home and be kind to them, and try to tame them, and teach them *our* ways (with never-varying non-success, it is true, but in, oh, such jolly company!), became a hobby that lasted me, on and off, for seven years.

La Mare d'Auteuil! The very name has a magic, from all the associations that gathered round it during that time, to cling for ever.

How I loved it! At night, snoozing in my warm bed, I would awesomely think of it, and how solemn it looked when I had reluctantly left it at dusk, an hour or two before; then I would picture it to myself, later, lying deep and cold and still under the stars, in the dark thicket, with all that weird, uncanny life seething beneath its stagnant surface.

Then gradually the water would sink, and the reeds, left naked, begin to move and rustle ominously, and from among their roots in the uncovered slush everything alive would make for the middle—hopping, gliding, writhing frantically....

Down shrank the water; and soon in the slimy bottom, yards



LA MARE D'AUTEUIL!

The very name has a magic, from all the associations that gathered round it during that time, to cling for ever.

below, huge fat salamanders, long-lost and forgotten tadpoles as large as rats, gigantic toads, enormous flat beetles, all kinds of hairy, scaly, spiny, blear-eyed, bulbous, shapeless monsters without name, mud-coloured offspring of the mire that had been sleeping there for hundreds of years, woke up, and crawled in and out, and wallowed and interwiggled, and devoured each other, like the great saurians and batrachians in my *Manuel de Géologie Élémentaire*. Edition illustrée à l'usage des enfants. Par Jules Saindou, Bachelier et Maître ès Lettres et ès Sciences.

Then would I wake up with a start, in a cold perspiration, an icy chill shooting through me that roughed my skin and stirred the roots of my hair, and ardently wish for to-morrow morning.

In after years, and far away among the cold fogs of Clerkenwell,

when the frequent longing would come over me to revisit "the pretty place of my birth," it was for the Mare d'Auteuil I longed the most; *that* was the loadstar, the very pole of my homesick desires; always thither the wings of my hopeless fancy bore me first of all; it was, oh! to tread that sunlit grassy brink once more, and to watch the merry tadpoles swarm, and the green frog take its header like a little man, and the water-rat swim to his hole among the roots of the willow, and the horse-leech thread his undulating way between the water-lily stems; and to dream fondly of the delightful, irrevocable past, on the very spot of all where I and mine were always happiest!

" Qu'ils étaient beaux, les jours
De France!"

In the avenue I have mentioned (*the* avenue, as it is still to me, and as I will always call it) there was on the right hand, half the way up, a *maison de santé*, or boarding-house, kept by one Madame Pelé; and there among others came to board and lodge, a short while after our advent, four or five gentlemen who had tried to invade France, with a certain grim Pretender at their head, and a tame eagle as a symbol of empire to rally round.

The expedition had failed; the Pretender had been consigned to a fortress; the eagle had found a home in the public slaughter-house of Boulogne-sur-Mer, which it adorned for many years, and where it fed as it had never probably fed before; and these, the faithful followers, le Colonel Voisil, le Major Duquesnois, le Capitaine Audenis, le Docteur Lombal (and one or two others whose names I have forgotten), were prisoners on parole at Madame Pelé's, and did not seem to find their durance very vile.

I grew to know and love them all, especially the Major Duquesnois, an almost literal translation into French of Colonel Newcome. He took to me at once, in spite of my Englishness, and drilled me, and taught me the exercise as it was performed in the Vieille Garde; and told me a new fairy tale, I verily believe, every afternoon for seven years. Scheherezade could do no more for a Sultan, and to save her own neck from the bowstring!

Cher et bien aimé "Vieux de la Vieille!" with his big iron-gray mustache, his black satin stock, his spotless linen, his long green frockcoat so baggy about the skirts, and the smart red ribbon in his button-hole! He little foresaw with what warm and affectionate regard his memory would be kept forever sweet and green in the heart of his hereditary foe and small English tyrant and companion!

Opposite Madame Pelé's, and the only other dwelling besides hers and ours in the avenue, was a charming little white villa with a Grecian portico, on which were inscribed in letters of gold the words "Parva sed Aptā;" but it was not tenanted till two or three years after our arrival.

In the genial French fashion of those times we soon got on terms of intimacy with these and other neighbours, and saw much of each other at all times of the day.

My tall and beautiful young mother (la belle Madame Pasquier, as she was gallantly called) was an Englishwoman who had been born and partly brought up in Paris.

My gay and jovial father (le beau Pasquier, for he was also tall and comely to the eye) was a Frenchman, although an English subject,



"PRESENTEZ ARMES!"

who had been born and partly brought up in London; for he was the child of *émigrés* from France during the Reign of Terror.

He was gifted with a magnificent, a phenomenal voice—a barytone and tenor rolled into one; a marvel of richness, sweetness, flexibility, and power—and had intended to sing at the opera; indeed, he had studied for three years at the Paris Conservatoire to that end; and there he had carried all before him, and given rise to the highest hopes. But his family, who were Catholics of the blackest and Legitimists of the whitest dye—and as poor as church rats—had objected to such a godless and derogatory career; so the world lost a great singer, and the great singer a mine of wealth and fame.

However, he had just enough to live upon, and had married a wife (a heretic!) who had just about as much, or as little; and he spent his time, and both his money and hers, in scientific inventions—to little purpose, for well as he had learned how to sing, he had not been to any conservatoire where they teach one how to invent.

So that, as he waited "for his ship to come home," he sang only to amuse his wife, as they say the nightingale does; and to ease himself of superfluous energy, and to charm the servants, and le Père et la Mère François, and the five followers of Napoleon, and all and everybody who cared to listen, and last and least (and most!), myself.

For this great neglected gift of his, on which he set so little store, was already to me the most beautiful and mysterious thing in the world; and next to this, my mother's sweet playing on the harp and piano, for she was an admirable musician.

It was her custom to play at night, leaving the door of my bedroom ajar, and also the drawing-room door, so that I could hear her till I fell asleep.

Sometimes, when my father was at home, the spirit would move him to hum or sing the airs she played, as he paced up and down the room on the track of a new invention.

And though he sang and hummed "pian-piano," the sweet, searching, manly tones seemed to fill all space.

The hushed house became a sounding-board, the harp a mere subservient tinkle, and my small, excitable frame would thrill and vibrate under the waves of my unconscious father's voice; and oh, the charming airs he sang!

His stock was inexhaustible, and so was hers; and thus an endless succession of lovely melodies went ringing through that happy period.

And just as when a man is drowning, or falling from a height, his whole past life is said to be mapped out before his mental vision as in a single flash, so seven years of sweet, priceless home love—seven times four changing seasons of simple, genial, prae-imperial Frenchness; an ideal house, with all its pretty furniture, and shape, and colour; a garden full of trees and flowers; a large park, and all the wild live things therein; a town and its inhabitants; a mile or two of historic river; a wood big enough to reach from the Arc de Triomphe to St. Cloud (and in it the pond of ponds); and every wind and weather that the changing seasons can bring—all lies embedded and embalmed for me in every single bar of at least a hundred different tunes, to be evoked at will for the small trouble and cost of just whistling or humming the same, or even playing it with one finger on the piano—when I had a piano within reach.

Enough to last me for a lifetime—with proper economy, of course—it will not do to exhaust, by too frequent experiment, the strange capacity of a melodic bar for preserving the essence of bygone things, and days that are no more.

O Nightingale! whether thou singest thyself or, better still, if thy voice be not in thy throat, but in thy fiery heart and subtle brain, and thou makest songs for the singing of many others, blessed be thy name! The very sound of it is sweet in every clime and tongue: Nightingale, Rossignol, Usignuolo, Bulbul! Even Nachtigall does not sound amiss in the mouth of a fair English girl who has had a Hanoverian for a governess. And, indeed, it is in the Nachtigall's country that the best music is made.

And O Nightingale! never, never grudge thy song to those who love it—nor waste it upon those who do not....

Thus serenaded, I would close my eyes, and lapped in darkness and warmth and heavenly sound, be lulled asleep—perchance to dream!

For my early childhood was often haunted by a dream, which at first I took for a reality—a transcendent dream of some interest and importance to mankind, as the patient reader will admit in time. But many years of my life passed away before I was able to explain and account for it.

I had but to turn my face to the wall, and soon I found myself in company with a lady who had white hair and a young face—a very beautiful young face.

Sometimes I walked with her, hand in hand—I being quite a small child—and together we fed innumerable pigeons who lived in a tower by a winding stream that ended in a water-mill. It was too lovely, and I would wake.

Sometimes we went into a dark place, where there was a fiery furnace with many holes, and many people working and moving about—among them a man with white hair and a young face, like the lady, and beautiful red heels to his shoes. And under his guidance I would contrive to make in the furnace a charming little cocked hat of coloured glass—a treasure! And the sheer joy thereof would wake me.

Sometimes the white-haired lady and I would sit together at a square box from which she made lovely music, and she would sing my favourite song—a song that I adored. But I always woke before this song came to an end, on account of the too insupportably intense bliss I felt on hearing it; and all I could remember when awake were the words "triste—comment—sale."

The air, which I knew so well in my dream, I could not recall.

It seemed as though some innermost core of my being, some childish holy of holies, secreted a source of supersubtle reminiscence, which, under some stimulus that now and again became active during sleep, exhaled itself in this singular dream—shadowy and slight, but invariably accompanied by a sense of felicity so measureless and so penetrating that I would always wake in a mystic flutter of ecstasy, the bare remembrance of which was enough to bless and make happy many a succeeding hour.

Besides this happy family of three, close by (in the Street of the Tower) lived my grandmother, Mrs. Biddulph, and my Aunt Plunket, a widow, with her two sons, Alfred and Charlie, and her daughter Madge. They also were fair to look at—extremely so—of the gold-haired, white-skinned, well-grown Anglo-Saxon type, with frank, open, jolly manners, and no beastly British pride.

So that, physically at least, we reflected much credit on the English name, which was not in good odour just then at Passy-lès-Paris, where Waterloo was unforgotten. In time, however, our nationality was condoned on account of our good looks—"non Angli sed angeli!" as M. Saindou was gallantly pleased to exclaim when he called (with a prospectus of his school) and found us all gathered together under the big apple-tree on our lawn.

But English beauty in Passy was soon to receive a memorable addition to its ranks in the person of a certain Madame Seraskier, who came with an invalid little daughter to live in the house so modestly described in gold as "Parva sed Apta."

She was the English, or rather the Irish, wife of a Hungarian patriot and man of science, Dr. Seraskier (son of the famous violinist) an extremely tall, thin man, almost gigantic, with a grave, benevolent face, and a head like a prophet's; who was, like my father, very much away from his family—conspiring perhaps—or perhaps only inventing (like my father), and looking out "for his ship to come home"!

This fair lady's advent was a sensation—to me a sensation that never palled or wore itself away; it was no longer now "la belle Madame Pasquier," but "la divine Madame Seraskier"—beauty-blind as the French are apt to be.

She topped my tall mother by more than half a head; as was remarked by Madame Pelé, whose similes were all of the kitchen and dining-room, "elle lui mangerait des petits pâtés sur la tête!" And height, that lends dignity to ugliness, magnifies beauty on a scale of geometrical progression—2, 4, 8, 16, 32—for every consecutive inch, between five feet five, let us say, and five feet ten or eleven (or thereabouts), which I take to have been Madame Seraskier's measurement.

She had black hair and blue eyes—of the kind that turns violet in a novel—and a beautiful white skin, lovely hands and feet, a perfect figure, and features chiselled and finished and polished and turned out with such singular felicitousness that one gazed and gazed till the heart was full of a strange jealous resentment at any one else having the right to gaze on something so rare, so divinely, so sacredly fair—any one in the world but one's self!

But a woman can be all this without being Madame Seraskier—she was much more.

For the warmth and genial kindness of her nature shone through

her eyes and rang in her voice. All was of a piece with her—her simplicity, her grace, her naturalness and absence of vanity; her courtesy, her sympathy, her mirthfulness.

I do not know which was the most irresistible: she had a slight Irish accent when she spoke English, a less slight English accent when she spoke French!

I made it my business to acquire both.

Indeed, she was in heart and mind and body what we should *all* be but for the lack of a little public spirit and self-denial (under proper guidance) during the last few hundred years on the part of a few thousand millions of our improvident fellow-creatures.

There should be no available ugly frames for beautiful souls to be hurried into by carelessness or mistake, and no ugly souls should be suffered to creep, like hermit-crabs, into beautiful shells never intended for them. The outward and visible form should mark the inward and spiritual grace; that it seldom does so is a fact there is no gainsaying. Alas! such beauty is such an exception that its possessor, like a prince of the blood royal, is pampered and spoiled from the very cradle, and every good and generous and unselfish impulse is corroded by adulation—that spontaneous tribute so lightly won, so quickly paid, and accepted so royally as a due.

So that only when by Heaven's grace the very beautiful are also very good, is it time for us to go down on our knees, and say our prayers in thankfulness and adoration; for the divine has been permitted to make itself manifest for a while in the perishable likeness of our poor humanity.

A beautiful face! a beautiful tune! Earth holds nothing to beat these, and of such, for want of better materials, we have built for ourselves the kingdom of Heaven.

"Plus oblige, et peut davantage
Un beau visage
Qu'un homme armé —
Et rien n'est meilleur que d'entendre
Air doux et tendre
Jadis aimé!"

My mother soon became the passionately devoted friend of the divine Madame Seraskier; and I, what would I not have done—what danger would I not have faced—what death would I not have died for her!

I did not die; I lived her protestant to be, for nearly fifty years. For nearly fifty years to recollect the rapture and the pain it was to look at her; that inexplicable longing ache, that dumb, delicious, complex, innocent distress, for which none but the greatest poets have ever found expression; and which, perhaps, they have not felt half so acutely, these glib and gifted ones, as *I* did, at the susceptible ages of seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, and twelve.

She had other slaves of my sex. The five Napoleonic heroes did homage each after his fashion: the good Major with a kind of sweet fatherly tenderness touching to behold; the others with perhaps less unselfish adoration; notably the brave Capitaine Audenis, of the fair waxed mustache and beautiful brown tail coat, so tightly buttoned with gilt buttons across his enormous chest, and imperceptible little feet so tightly imprisoned in shiny tipped female cloth boots, with buttons of mother-of-pearl; whose hobby was, I believe, to try and compensate himself for the misfortunes of war by more successful attempts in another direction. Anyhow he betrayed a warmth that made my small bosom a Gehenna, until she laughed and snubbed him into due propriety and shame-faced self-effacement.

It soon became evident that she favoured two, at least, out of all this little masculine world—the Major and myself; and a strange trio we made.

Her poor little daughter, the object of her passionate solicitude, a very clever and precocious child, was the reverse of beautiful, although she would have had fine eyes but for her red lashless lids. She wore her thick hair cropped short, like a boy, and was pasty and sallow in complexion, hollow-cheeked, thick-featured, and overgrown, with long thin hands and feet, and arms and legs of quite pathetic length and tenuity; a silent and melancholy little girl, who sucked her thumb perpetually, and kept her own counsel. She would have to lie in bed for days together, and when she got well enough to sit up, I (to please her mother) would read to her *Le Robinson Suisse*, *Sandford and Merton*, *Evenings at Home*, *Les Contes de Perrault*, the shipwreck from "Don Juan," of which we never tired, and the "Giaour," the "Corsair," and "Mazeppa"; and last, but not least, *Peter Parley's Natural History*, which we got to know by heart.

And out of this latter volume I would often declaim for her benefit what has always been to me the most beautiful poem in the world, possibly because it was the first I read for myself, or else because it is so intimately associated with those happy days. Under an engraving of a wild duck (after Bewick, I believe) were quoted W. C. Bryant's lines "To a Waterfowl." They charmed me then and charm me now as nothing else has quite charmed me; I become a child again as I think of them, with a child's virgin subtlety of perception and magical susceptibility to vague suggestions of the Infinite.

Poor little Mimsey Seraskier would listen with distended eyes and quick comprehension. She had a strange fancy that a pair of invisible beings, "La fée Tarapatapoum," and "Le Prince Charmant" (two favourite characters of M. le Major's) were always in attendance upon us—upon her and me—and were equally fond of us both; that is, "La fée Tarapatapoum" of me, and "Le Prince Charmant" of her—and watched over us and would protect us through life.

"O! ils sont joliment bien ensemble, tous les deux—they sont inséparables!" she would often exclaim, *apropos* of these visionary beings; and *apropos* of the waterfowl she would say—

"Il aime beaucoup cet oiseau-là, le Prince Charmant! dis encore, quand il vole si haut, et qu'il fait froid, et qu'il est fatigué, et que la nuit vient, mais qu'il ne veut pas descendre!"

And I would re-spout—

"All day thy wings have fanned,
At that far height, the cold, thin atmosphere,
Yet stoop not, weary, to the welcome land,
Though the dark night be near!"

And poor, morbid, precocious, overwrought Mimsey's eyes would fill, and she would meditatively suck her thumb and think unutterable things.

And then I would copy Bewick's woodcuts for her, as she sat on the arm of my chair and patiently watched; and she would say: "La fée Tarapatapoum trouve que tu dessines dans la perfection!" and treasure up these little masterpieces—"pour l'album de la fée Tarapatapoum!"

There was one drawing she prized above all others—a steel engraving in a volume of Byron, which represented two beautiful beings of either sex, walking hand in hand through a dark cavern. The man was in sailor's garb; the lady, who went barefoot and lightly clad, held a torch; and underneath was written—

"And Neuha led her Torquil by the hand,
And waved along the vaults her flaming brand."

I spent hours in copying it for her, and she preferred the copy to the original, and would have it that the two figures were excellent portraits of her Prince and Fairy.

Sometimes during these readings and sketchings under the apple-tree on the lawn, the sleeping Médor (a huge nondescript sort of dog, built up of every breed in France, with the virtues of all and the vices of none) would wag his three inches of tail, and utter soft whimperings of welcome in his dream; and she would say—

"C'est le Prince Charmant qui lui dit; "Médor, donne la patte!"

Or our old tomcat would rise from his slumbers with his tail up, and rub an imaginary skirt; and it was—

"Regarde Mistigris! La fée Tarapatapoum est en train de lui frotter les oreilles!"

We mostly spoke French, in spite of strict injunctions to the contrary from our fathers and mothers, who were much concerned lest we should forget our English altogether.

In time we made a kind of ingenious compromise; for Mimsey, who was full of resource, invented a new language, or rather two, which we called Frankingle and Inglefrank, respectively. They consisted in anglicising French nouns and verbs and then

conjugating and pronouncing them Englishly, or *vice versa*.

For instance, it was very cold, and the schoolroom window was open, so she would say in Frankingle--

"Dispeach yourself to ferm the fenester, Gogo. It geals to pier-fend! we shall be inrhumed!" or else, if I failed to immediately understand—"Gogo, il frise a splitter les stonnes—maque aste et chute le vindcau; mais chute—le donc vite! Je snize déjà!" which was Inglefrank.

With this contrivance we managed to puzzle and mystify the



UNDER THE APPLE-TREE WITH THE PRINCE AND FAIRY

uninitiated, English and French alike. The intelligent reader, who sees it all in print, will not be so easily taken in.

When Mimsy was well enough, she would come with my cousins and me into the park, where we always had a good time—lying in ambush for red Indians, rescuing Madge Plunket from a caitiff knight, or else hunting snakes and field-mice and lizards, and digging for lizards' eggs, which we would hatch at home—that happy refuge for all manner of beasts, as well as litt'e boys and girls. For there were squirrels, hedgehogs, and guinea-pigs; an owl, a raven, a monkey, and white mice; little birds that had strayed from the maternal nest before they could fly (they always died!), the dog Médor, and any other dog who chose; not to mention

a gigantic rocking-horse made out of a real stuffed pony—the smallest pony that had ever been!

Often our united high spirits were too boisterous for Mimsey. Dreadful headaches would come on, and she would sit in a corner, nursing a hedgehog with one arm and holding her thumb in her mouth with the other. Only when we were alone together was she happy; and then, *moult tristement!*

On summer evenings whole parties of us, grownup and small, would walk through the park and the Bois de Boulogne to the "Mare d'Auteuil"; as we got near enough for Médor to scent the water, he would bark and grin and gyrate, and go mad with excitement, for he had the gift of diving after stones, and liked to show it off.

There we would catch huge olive-coloured waterbeetles, yellow underneath; red-bellied newts; green frogs, with beautiful spots and a splendid parabolic leap; gold and silver fish, pied with purple brown. I mention them in the order of their attractiveness. The fish were too tame and easily caught, and their beauty of too civilised an order; the rare, flat, vicious dytiscus "took the cake."

Sometimes, even, we would walk through Boulogne to St. Cloud, to see the new railway and the trains—an inexhaustible subject of wonder and delight—and eat ices at the "Tête Noire" (a hotel which had been the scene of a terrible murder, that led to a cause célèbre); and we would come back through the scented night, while the glowworms were shining in the grass, and the distant frogs were croaking in the Mare d'Auteuil. Now and then a startled roebuck would gallop in short bounds across the path, from thicket to thicket, and Médor would go mad again, and wake the echoes of the new Paris fortifications, which were still in course of construction.

He had not the gift of catching roebucks!

If my father were of the party, he would yodel Tyrolese melodies, and sing lovely songs of Boieldieu, Hérold, and Grétry; or "Drink to me only with thine eyes," or else the "Bay of Dublin," for Madame Seraskier, who had the nostalgia of her beloved country whenever her beloved husband was away.

Or else we would break out into a jolly chorus and march to the tune—

"Marie, trempe ton pain,
Marie, trempe ton pain,
Marie, trempe ton pain dans la soupe;
Marie, trempe ton pain
Marie, trempe ton pain,
Marie, trempe ton pain dans le vin!"

Or else—

"La—soupe aux choux—se fait dans la marmite;
Dans—la marmite—se fait la soupe aux choux."

which would give us all the nostalgia of supper!

Or else, again, if it were too hot to sing, or we were too tired,

M. le Major, forsaking the realms of fairyland, and uncovering his high bald head as he walked, would gravely and reverently tell us of his great master, of Bricenne, of Marcngo, and Austerlitz; of the farewells at Fontainebleau, and the Hundred Days—never of St. Helena; he would not trust himself to speak to us of that! And gradually working his way to Waterloo, he would put his hat on, and demonstrate to us, by A-B, how, virtually, the English had lost the day, and why and wherefore. And on all the little party a solemn, awestruck stillness would fall as we listened, and on some of us the sweet nostalgia of bed!

Oh, the good old time!



LA BATAILLE DE WATERLOO.

The night was consecrated for me by the gleam and scent and rustle of Madame Seraskier's gown, as I walked by her side in the deepening dusk—a gleam of yellow, or pale blue, or white—a scent of sandalwood—a rustle that told of a light, vigorous tread on firm, narrow, high-arched feet, that were not easily tired; of an anxious, motherly wish to get back to Mimsey, who was not strong enough for these longer expeditions.

On the shorter ones I used sometimes to carry Mimsey on my back most of the way home (to please her mother)—a frail burden, with her poor, long, thin arms round my neck, and her pale, cold cheek against my ear—she weighed nothing! And when I was

tired M. le Major would relieve me, but not for long. She always wanted to be carried by Gogo (for so I was called, for no reason whatever, unless it was that my name was Peter).

She would start at the pale birches that shone out against the gloom, and shiver if a bough scraped her, and tell me all about the Erl-king—"mais comme ils sont là tous les deux" (meaning the Prince and the Fairy) "il n'y a absolument rien à craindre."

And Mimsey was *si bonne camarade*, in spite of her solemnity and poor health and many pains, so grateful for small kindnesses, so appreciative of small talents, so indulgent to small vanities (of which she seemed to have no more share than her mother), and so deeply humorous in spite of her eternal gravity—for she was a real tomboy at heart—that I soon carried her, not only to please her mother, but to please herself, and would have done anything for her.

As for M. le Major, he gradually discovered that Mimsey was half a martyr and half a saint, and possessed all the virtues under the sun.

"Ah, vous ne la comprenez pas, cette enfant; vous verrez un jour quand ça ira mieux! vous verrez! elle est comme sa mère.... elle a toutes les intelligences de la tête et du coeur!" and he would wish it had pleased Heaven that he should be her grandfather—on the maternal side.

L'art d'être grandpère! This weather-beaten, war-battered old soldier had learned it, without ever having had either a son or a daughter of his own. He was a *born* grandfather!

Moreover, Mimsey and I had many tastes and passions in common—music, for instance, as well as Bewick's woodcuts and Byron's poetry, and roast chestnuts and domestic pets; and above all, the *Mare d'Auteuil*, which she preferred in the autumn, when the brown and yellow leaves were eddying and scampering and chasing each other round its margin, or drifting on its troubled surface, and the cold wet wind piped through the dishevelled boughs of the forest, under the leaden sky.

She said it was good to be there then, and think of home and the fireside; and better still, when home was reached at last, to think of the desolate pond we had left; and good, indeed, it was to trudge home by wood and park and avenue at dusk, when the bats were about, with Alfred and Charlie and Mimsey and Madge and Médor; swishing our way through the lush, dead leaves, scattering the beautiful, ripe horse-chestnut out of its split creamy case, or picking up acorns and beechnuts here and there as we went.

And, once home, it was good, very good, to think how dark and lonesome and shivery it must be out there by the *mare*, as we squatted and chatted and roasted chestnuts by the wood fire in the schoolroom before the candles were lit—*entre chien et loup*, as was called the French gloaming—while Thérèse was laying the tea things, and telling us the news, and cutting bread and butter;

and my mother played the harp in the drawing-room above; till the last red streak died out of the wet west behind the swaying tree-tops and the curtains were drawn, and there was light, and the appetites were let loose.

I love to sit here, in my solitude and captivity, and recall every incident of that sweet epoch—to ache with the pangs of happy remembrance; than which, for the likes of me, great poets tell us there is no greater grief. This sorrow's crown of sorrow is my joy and my consolation, and ever has been; and I would not exchange it for youth, health, wealth, honour, and freedom; only for thrice happy childhood itself once more, over and over again, would I give up its thrice happy recollections.

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That it should not be all beer and skittles with us, and therefore apt to pall, my cousins and I had to work pretty hard. In the first place, my dear mother did all she could to make me an infant prodigy of learning. She tried to teach me Italian, which she spoke as fluently as English or French (for she had lived much in Italy), and I had to translate the "*Gierusalemme Liberata*" into both those latter languages—a task which has remained unfinished—and to render the "*Allegro*" and the "*Penseroso*" into Miltonian French prose, and "*Le Cid*" into Corneillian English. Then there were Pinnock's histories of Greece and Rome to master, and, of course, the Bible, and, every Sunday, the Collect, the Gospel, and the Epistle to get by heart. No, it was not all beer and skittles.

It was her pleasure to teach, but, alas! not mine to learn; and we cost each other many a sigh, but loved each other all the more perhaps.

Then we went in the mornings, my cousins and I, to M. Saindou's, opposite, that we might learn French grammar and French-Latin and French-Greek. But on three afternoons out of the weekly six Mr. Slade, a Cambridge sizar stranded in Paris, came to anglicise (and neutralise) the Latin and Greek we had learned in the morning, and to show us what sorry stuff the French had made of them and of their quantities.

Perhaps the Greek and Latin quantities are a luxury of English growth—a mere social test—a little pitfall of our own invention, like the letter *h*, for the tripping up of unwary pretenders; or else, French education being so deplorably cheap in those days, the schoolmasters there could not afford to take such fanciful superfluities into consideration; it was not to be done at the price.

In France, be it remembered, the King and his greengrocer sent their sons to the same school (which did not happen to be M. Saindou's, by the way, where it was nearly all greengrocer and no King); and the fee for bed, board, and tuition, in all public schools alike, was something like thirty pounds a year.

The Latin, in consequence, was without the distinction that

comes of exclusiveness, and quite lacked that aristocratic flavour, so grateful and comforting to scholar and ignoramus alike, which the costly British public-school system (and the British accent) alone can impart to a dead language. When French is dead we shall lend it a grace it never had before; some of us even manage to do so already.

That is (no doubt) why the best French writers so seldom point their morals and adorn their tales, as ours do, with the usual pretty, familiar, and appropriate lines out of Horace or Virgil; and why Latin is so little quoted in French talk, except here and there by a weary shop-walker, who sighs—

“*Varium et mutabile semper femina!*” as he rolls up the unsold silk; or exclaims, “*O rus! quando te aspiciam!*” as he takes his railway ticket for Asnières on the first fine Sunday morning in spring.

But this is a digression, and we have wandered far away from Mr. Slade.

Good old Slade!

We used to sit on the stone posts outside the avenue gate and watch for his appearance at a certain distant corner of the winding street.

With his green tail coat, his stiff shirt collar, his thick flat thumbs stuck in the armholes of his nankeen waistcoat, his long flat feet turned inward, his reddish mutton-chop whiskers, his hat on the back of his head, and his clean, fresh, blooming, virtuous, English face—the sight of him was not sympathetic when he appeared at last.

Occasionally, in the course of his tuition, illness or domestic affairs would, to his great regret, detain him from our midst, and the beatitude we could experience when the conviction gradually dawned upon us that we were watching for him in vain was too deep for either words or deeds or outward demonstration of any sort. It was enough to sit on our stone posts and let it steal over us by degrees.

These beatitudes were few and far between. It would be infelicitous, perhaps, to compare the occasional absences of a highly respectable English tutor to an angel's visits, but so we felt them.

And then he would make up for it next afternoon, that conscientious Englishman; which was fair enough to our parents, but not to us. And then what extra severity, as interest for the beggarly loan of half an afternoon! What rappings on ink-stained knuckles with a beastly, hard, round, polished, heavy-wooded, business-like English ruler!

It was our way in those days to think that everything English was beastly—an expression our parents thought we were much too fond of using.

But perhaps we were not without some excuse for this unparadonable sentiment. For there was *another* English family in Passy—the Prendergasts, an older family than ours—that is, the parents (and uncles and aunts) were middle-aged, the grandmother dead,

and the children grown up. We had not the honour of their acquaintance. But whether that was their misfortune and our fault (or *vice versa*) I cannot tell. Let us hope the former.

They were of an opposite type to ours, and, though I say it, their type was a singularly unattractive one; perhaps it may have been the original of those caricatures of our compatriots by which French comic artists have sought to avenge Waterloo. It was stiff, haughty, contemptuous. It had prominent front teeth, a high nose, a long upper lip, a receding jaw; it had dull, cold, stupid,



GOOD OLD SLADE.

selfish green eyes, like a pike's, that swerved neither to right nor left, but looked steadily over people's heads as it stalked along in its pride of impeccable British self-righteousness.

At the sudden sight of it (especially on Sundays) all the cardinal virtues became hateful on the spot, and respectability a thing to run away from. Even that smooth, close-shaven cleanliness was so Puritanically aggressive as to make one abhor the very idea of soap.

Its accent, when it spoke French (in shops), instead of being musical and sweet and sympathetic, like Madame Seraskier's, was barbarous and grotesque, with dreadful "ongs," and "angs," and "ows," and "ays"; and its manner overbearing, suspicious,

and disdainful; and then we could hear its loud, insolent English asides; and though it was tall and straight and not outwardly deformed, it looked such a kill-joy skeleton at a feast, such a portentous carnival mask of solemn emptiness, such a dreary, doleful, unfunny figure of fun, that one felt Waterloo might some day be forgiven, even in Passy, but the Prendergasts, *never*!

I have lived so long away from the world that, for all I know, this ancient British type, this "grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and ominous bird of yore," may have become extinct, like another,



OMINOUS BIRDS OF YORE.

but less unprepossessing bird—the dodo; whereby our state is the more gracious.

But in those days, and generalising somewhat hastily as young people are apt to do, we grew to think that England must be full of Prendergasts, and did not want to go there.

To this universal English beastliness of things we made a few exceptions, it is true, but the list was not long: tea, mustard, pickles, gingerbread-nuts, and, of all things in the world, the English loaf of household bread that came to us once a week as a great treat and recompense for our virtues, and harmonised so well with Passy butter. It was too delicious! But there was always a difficulty, a dilemma—whether to eat it with butter alone, or with "cassonade" (French brown sugar) added.

Mimsey knew her own mind, and loved it with French brown sugar, and if she were not there I would save for her half of my slices, and carefully cassonade them for her myself.

On the other hand, we thought everything French the reverse of beastly—except all the French boys we knew, and at M. Saindou's there were about two hundred; then there were all the boys in Passy (whose name was legion, and who *did not* go to M. Saindou's), and we knew all the boys in Passy. So that we were not utterly bereft of material for good, stodgy, crusty, parietic English prejudice.

Nor did the French boys fail to think us beastly in return, and sometimes to express the thought; especially the little vulgar boys, whose playground was the street—the *parcours du Passy*. They hated our white silk chimney-pot hats, and large collars, and Eton jackets, and called us "sacred godem's," as their ancestors used to call ours in the days of Joan of Arc. Sometimes they would throw stones, and then there were collisions, and bleedings of impertinent little French noses, and runnings away of pusillanimous little French legs, and dreadful wails of "O là, là! O là, là—maman!" when they were overtaken by English ones.

Not but what *our* noses were made to bleed now and then, unvictoriously, by a certain blacksmith—always the same young blacksmith—Boitard!

It is always a young blacksmith who does these things,—or a young butcher.

Of course, for the honour of Great Britain, one of us finally licked him to such a tune that he has never been able to hold up his head since. It was about a cat. It came off at dusk, one Christmas Eve, on the "Isle of Swans," between Passy and Grenelle (too late to save the cat).

I was the hero of this battle. "It's now or never," I thought, and saw scarlet, and went for my foe like a maniac. The ring was kept by Alfred and Charlie, helped, oddly enough, by a couple of male Prendergasts, who so far forgot themselves as to take an interest in the proceedings. Madge and Mimsey looked on, terrified and charmed.

It did not last long, and was worthy of being described by Homer, or even in *Bell's Life*. That is one of the reasons why I will not describe it. The two Prendergasts seemed to enjoy it very much while it lasted, and when it was over they remembered themselves again, and said nothing, and stalked away.

As we grew older and wiser we had permission to extend our explorations to Meudon, Versailles, St. Germain, and other delightful places; to ride thither on hired horses, after having duly learned to ride at the famous "School of Equitation," in the Rue Duphot.

Also, we swam in those delightful summer baths in the Seine, that are so majestically called "Schools of Natation," and became past masters in "la coupe" (a stroke no other Englishman but

ourselves has ever been quite able to manage), and in all the different delicate "nuances" of header-taking—"la coulante," "la hussarde," "la tête-bêche," "la tout ce que vous voudrez."

Also, we made ourselves at home in Paris, especially old Paris.

For instance, there was the island of St. Louis, with its stately old mansions *entre cour et jardin*, behind grim stone portals and high walls, where great magistrates and lawyers dwelt in dignified seclusion—the nobles of the robe; but where once had dwelt, in days gone by, the greater nobles of the sword—crusaders, perhaps, and knights templars, like Brian de Bois Guilbert.

And that other more famous island, la Cité, where Paris itself was born, where Notre Dame reared its twin towers above the melancholy, gray, leprous walls and dirty brown roofs of the Hôtel-Dieu.

Pathetic little tumble-down old houses, all out of drawing and perspective, nestled like old spiders' webs between the buttresses of the great cathedral; and on two sides of the little square in front (the Place du Parvis Notre Dame) stood ancient stone dwellings, with high slate roofs and elaborately-wrought iron balconies. They seemed to have such romantic histories that I never tired of gazing at them, and wondering what the histories could be; and now I think of it, one of these very dwellings must have been the Hotel de Gondelaurier, where, according to the most veracious historian that ever was, poor Esmeralda once danced and played the tambourine to divert the fair damosel Fleur-de-Lys de Gondelaurier and her noble friends, all of whom she so transcended in beauty, purity, goodness, and breeding (although she was but an untaught, wandering, gipsy girl, out of the gutter); and there, before them all and the gay archer, she was betrayed to her final undoing by her goat, whom she had so imprudently taught how to spell the beloved name of "Phébus."

Close by was the Morgue, that gruesome building which the great etcher Méryon has managed to invest with some weird fascination akin to that it had for me in those days—and has now, as I see it with the charmed eyes of Memory.

La Morgue! what a fatal twang there is about the very name!

After gazing one's fill at the horrors within (as became a healthy-minded English boy), it was but a step to the equestrian statue of Henri Quatre, on the Pont-Neuf (the oldest bridge in Paris, by the way); there, astride his long-tailed charger, he smiled, *le roi vert et galant*, just midway between either bank of the historic river, just where it was most historic; and turned his back on the Paris of the Bourgeois King with the pear-shaped face and the mutton-chop whiskers.

And there one stood, spellbound in indecision, like the ass of Buridan between two sacks of oats; for on either side, north or south of the Pont-Neuf, were to be found enchanting slums, all more attractive the ones than the others, winding up and down hill

and roundabout and in and out, like haunting illustrations by Gustave Doré to *Drolatick Tales* by Balzac (not seen or read by me till many years later, I beg to say).

Dark, narrow, silent, deserted streets that would turn up afterward in many a nightmare—with the gutter in the middle and towerlets and stone posts all along the sides; and high fantastic walls (where it was *défendu d'afficher*), with bits of old battlement at the top, and overhanging boughs of sycamore and lime, and behind them gray old gardens that dated from the days of Louis le Hutin and beyond! And suggestive names printed in old rusty iron letters at the street corners—"Rue Videgousset," "Rue Coupe-gorge," "Rue de la Vieille Truanderie," "Impasse de la Tour de Nesle," etc., that appealed to the imagination like a chapter from Hugo or Dumas.

And the way to these was by long, tortuous, busy thoroughfares, most irregularly flagged, and all alive with strange, delightful people in blue blouses, brown woollen tricots, wooden shoes, red and white cotton nightcaps, rags and patches; most graceful girls, with pretty, self-respecting feet, and flashing eyes, and no head-dress but their own hair; gay, fat hags, all smile; thin hags, with faces of appalling wickedness or misery; precociously witty little gutter imps of either sex; and such cripples! jovial hunchbacks, lusty blind beggars, merry creeping paralytics, scrofulous wretches who joked and punned about their sores; light-hearted, genial, mendicant monsters without arms or legs, who went ramping through the mud on their bellies from one underground wine-shop to another; and blue-chinned priests, and barefooted brown monks, and demure Sisters of Charity, and here and there a jolly chiffonnier with his hook, and his knap-basket behind; or a cuirassier, or a gigantic carbineer, or gay little "Hunter of Africa," or a couple of bold gendarmes riding abreast, with their towering black *bonnets d'poil*; or a pair of pathetic little red-legged soldiers, conscripts just fresh from the country, with innocent light eyes and straw-coloured hair and freckled brown faces, walking hand in hand, and staring at all the pork-butchers' shops—and sometimes at the pork-butcher's wife!

Then a proletarian wedding procession—headed by the bride and bridegroom, an ungainly pair in their Sunday best—all singing noisily together. Then a pauper funeral, or a covered stretcher, followed by sympathetic eyes on its way to the Hôtel-Dieu; or the last sacrament, with bell and candle, bound for the bedside of some humble agoniser *in extremis*—and we all uncovered as it went by.

And then, for a running accompaniment of sound, the clanging chimes, the itinerant street cries, the tinkle of the *marchand de coco*, the drum, the *cor de chasse*, the organ of Barbary, the ubiquitous pet parrot, the knife-grinder, the bawling fried-potato monger, and, most amusing of all, the poodle-clipper and his son, strophe

and antistrophe, for every minute the little boy would yell out in his shrill treble that "his father clipped poodles for thirty sous, and was competent also to undertake the management of refractory tomcats," upon which the father would growl in his solemn bass, "My son speaks the truth"—*L'enfant dit vrai!*

And rising above the general cacophony the din of the eternally cracking whip, of the heavy cart-wheel jolting over the uneven stones, the stamp and neigh of the spirited little French cart-horse and the music of his many bells, and the cursing and swearing and *hue! did!* of his driver! It was all entrancing.

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Thence home—to quiet, innocent, suburban Passy—by the quays, walking on the top of the stone parapet all the way, so as to miss nothing (till a gendarme was in sight), or else by the Boulevards, the Rue de Rivoli, the Champs Elysées, the Avenue de St. Cloud, and the Chaussée de la Muette. What a beautiful walk! Is there another like it anywhere as it was then, in the sweet early forties of this worn-out old century, and before this poor scribe had reached his teens?

Ah! it is something to have known that Paris, which lay at one's feet as one gazed from the heights of Passy, with all its pinnacles and spires and gorgeously-gilded domes, its Arch of Triumph, its Elysian Fields, its Field of Mars, its Towers of Our Lady, its far-off Column of July, its Invalids, and Vale of Grace, and Magdalen, and Place of the Concord, where the obelisk reared its exotic peak by the beautiful unforgettable fountains.

There flowed the many-bridged winding river, always the same way, unlike our tidal Thames, and always full; just beyond it was spread that stately, exclusive suburb, the despair of the newly rich and recently ennobled, where almost every other house bore a name which read like a page of French history; and farther still the merry, wicked Latin quarter and the grave Sorbonne, the Pantheon, the Garden of Plants; on the hither side, in the middle distance, the Louvre, where the kings of France had dwelt for centuries; the Tuileries, where "the King of the French" dwelt then, and just for a little while yet.

Well I knew and loved it all; and most of all I loved it when the sun was setting at my back, and innumerable distant windows reflected the blood-red western flame. It seemed as though half Paris were on fire, with the cold blue east for a background.

Dear Paris!

Yes, it is something to have roamed over it as a small boy—a small English boy (that is, a small boy unattended by his mother or his nurse), curious, inquisitive, and indefatigable; full of imagination; all his senses keen with the keenness that belongs to the morning of life: the sight of a hawk, the hearing of a bat, almost the scent of a hound.

Indeed, it required a nose both subtle and unprejudiced to understand and appreciate and thoroughly enjoy that Paris—not the Paris of M. le Baron Haussmann, lighted by gas and electricity, and flushed and drained by modern science; but the “good old Paris” of Balzac and Eugène Sue and *Les Mystères*—the Paris of dim oil lanterns suspended from iron gibbets (where once aristocrats had been hung); of water-carriers who sold water from their hand-carts, and delivered it at your door (*au cinquième*) for a penny a pail—to drink of, and wash in, and cook with, and all.

There were whole streets—and these by no means the least fascinating and romantic—where the unwritten domestic records of every house were afloat in the air outside it—records not all savoury or sweet, but always full of interest and charm!

One knew at a sniff as one passed the *porte cochère* what kind of people lived behind and above; what they ate and what they drank, and what their trade was; whether they did their washing at home, and burned tallow or wax, and mixed chicory with their coffee, and were over-fond of Gruyère cheese—the biggest, cheapest, plainest, and most formidable cheese in the world; whether they fried with oil or butter, and liked their omelets overdone and garlic in their salad, and sipped black-currant brandy or anisette as a liqueur; and were overrun with mice, and used cats or mouse-traps to get rid of them, or neither; and bought violets, or pinks, or gilly-flowers in season, and kept them too long; and fasted on Friday with red or white beans, or lentils, or had a dispensation from the Pope—or, haply, even dispensed with the Pope’s dispensation.

For of such a tell-tale kind were the overtones in that complex, odorous clang.

I will not define its fundamental note—ever there, ever the same; big with a warning of quick-coming woe to many households; whose unheeded waves, slow but sure, and ominous as those that rolled on great occasions from le Bourdon de Notre Dame (the Big Ben of Paris), drove all over the gay city and beyond, night and day—penetrating every corner, overflowing the most secret recesses, drowning the very incense by the altar steps.

“Le pauvre en sa cabane où le chaume le couvre
Est sujet à ses lois;
Et la garde qui veille aux barrières du Louvre
N’en défend point nos rois.”

And here, as I write, the faint, scarcely-perceptible, ghost-like suspicion of a scent—a mere nostalgic fancy, compound, generic, synthetic and all-embracing—an abstract olfactory symbol of the “Tout Paris” of fifty years ago, comes back to me out of the past; and fain would I inhale it in all its pristine fulness and vigour. For scents, like musical sounds, are rare sublimators of the essence of memory (this is a prodigious fine phrase—I hope it means something), and scents need not be seductive in themselves to recall the seductions of scenes and days gone by.

Alas! scents cannot be revived at will, like an

"Air doux et tendre
Jadis aimé!"

Oh that I could hum or whistle an old French smell! I could evoke all Paris, sweet prae-imperial Paris, in a single whiff!

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In such fashion did we three small boys, like the three musketeers (the fame of whose exploits was then filling all France), gather and pile up sweet memories, to chew the cud thereof in after-years, when far away and apart.

Of all that *bande joyeuse*—old and young and middle-aged, from M. le Major to Mimsey Seraskier—all are now dead but I—all except dear Madge, who was so pretty and light-hearted; and I have never seen her since.

.

Thus have I tried, with as much haste as I could command (being one of the plodding sort) to sketch that happy time, which came to an end suddenly and most tragically when I was twelve years old.

My dear and jovial happy-go-lucky father was killed in a minute by the explosion of a safety-lamp of his own invention, which was to have superseded Sir Humphry Davy's, and made our fortune! What a brutal irony of fate!

So sanguine was he of success, so confident that his ship had come home at last, that he had been in treaty for a nice little old manor in Anjou (with a nice little old castle to match), called la Marière, which had belonged to his ancestors, and from which we took our name (for we were Pasquier de la Marière, of quite a good old family); and there we were to live on our own land, as *gentilshommes campagnards*, and be French for evermore, under a paternal, pear-faced bourgeois king as a temporary *pis-aller* until Henri Cinq, Comte de Chambord, should come to his own again, and make us counts and barons and peers of France—Heaven knows what for!

My mother, who was beside herself with grief, went over to London, where this miserable accident had occurred, and had barely arrived there when she was delivered of a still-born child, and died almost immediately; and I became an orphan in less than a week, and a penniless one. For it turned out that my father had by this time spent every penny of his own and my mother's capital, and had, moreover, died deeply in debt. I was too young and too griefstricken to feel anything but the terrible bereavement, but it soon became patent to me that an immense alteration was to be made in my mode of life.

A relative of my mother's, Colonel Ibbetson (who was well off), came to Passy to do his best for me, and pay what debts had been

incurred in the neighbourhood, and settle my miserable affairs.

After a while it was decided by him and the rest of the family that I should go back with him to London, there to be disposed of for the best, according to his lights.

And on a beautiful June morning, redolent of lilac and syringa, and gay with dragonflies and butterflies and humble-bees, my happy childhood ended as it had begun. My farewells were heartrending (to me), but showed that I could inspire affection as well as feel it, and that was some compensation for my woe.

"Adieu, cher Monsieur Gogo. Bonne chance, et le Bon Dieu vous



FAREWELL TO PASSY.

bénisse," said le Père et la Mère François. Tears trickled down the Major's hooked nose on to his mustache, now nearly white.

Madame Seraskier strained me to her kind heart, and blessed and kissed me again and again, and rained her warm tears on my face; and hers was the last figure I saw as our fly turned into the Rue de la Tour on our way to London, Colonel Ibbetson exclaiming—

"Gad! who's the lovely young giantess that seems so fond of you, you little rascal, hey? By George! you young Don Giovanni, I'd have given something to be in your place! And who's that nice old man with the long green coat and the red ribbon? A *vieille moustache*, I suppose; looks almost like a gentleman. Precious few Frenchmen can do that!"

Such was Colonel Ibbetson.

And then and there, even as he spoke, a little drop of sullen, chill dislike to my guardian and benefactor, distilled from his voice, his aspect, the expression of his face, and his way of saying things, suddenly trickled into my consciousness—never to be wiped away!

As for poor Mimsey, her grief was so overwhelming that she could not come out and wish me good-bye like the others; and it led, as I afterwards heard, to a long illness, the worst she ever had; and when she recovered it was to find that her beautiful mother was no more.

Madame Seraskier died of the cholera, and so did le Père et la Mère François, and Madame Pelé, and one of the Napoleonic prisoners (not M. le Major), and several other people we had known, including a servant of our own, Thérèse, the devoted Thérèse, to whom we were all devoted in return. That malodorous tocsin, which I have compared to the big bell of Notre Dame, had warned, and warned, and warned in vain.

The *maison de santé* was broken up. M. le Major and his friends went and roosted on parole elsewhere, until a good time arrived for them, when their lost leader came back and remained—first as President of the French Republic, then as Emperor of the French themselves. No more parole was needed after that.

My grandmother and Aunt Plunket and her children fled in terror to Tours, and Mimsey went to Russia with her father.

Thus miserably ended that too happy septennate, and so no more at present of

“Le joli lieu de ma naissance!”

PART SECOND

The next decade of my outer life is so uninteresting, even to myself, that I will hurry through it as fast as I can. It will prove dull reading, I fear.

My Uncle Ibbetson (as I now called him) took to me, and arranged to educate and start me in life, and make "a gentleman" of me—an "English gentleman." But I had to change my name and adopt his; for some reason I did not know, he seemed to hate my father's very name. Perhaps it was because he had injured my father through life in many ways, and my father had always forgiven him; a very good reason! Perhaps it was because he had proposed to my mother three times when she was a girl, and had been thrice refused! (After the third time, he went to India for seven years, and just before his departure my father and mother were married, and a year after that I was born.)

So Pierre Pasquier de la Marière, *alias* Monsieur Gogo, became Master Peter Ibbetson, and went to Bluefriars, the gray-coat school, where he spent six years—an important slice out of a man's life, especially at that age.

I hated the garb; I hated the surroundings—the big hospital at the back, and that reek of cruelty, drunkenness, and filth, the cattle-market—where every other building was either a slaughter-house, a ginpalace, or a pawnbroker's shop; more than all I hated the gloomy jail opposite, where they sometimes hanged a man in public on a Monday morning. This dismal prison haunted my dreams when I wanted to dream of Passy, of my dear dead father and mother and Madame Seraskier.

For the first term or two they were ever in my thoughts, and I was always trying to draw their profiles on desks and slates and copybooks, till at last all resemblance seemed to fade out of them; and then I drew M. le Major till his side face became quite demoralised and impossible, and ceased to be like anything in life. Then I fell back on others: le Père François, with his eternal *bonnet de coton* and sabots stuffed with straw; the dog Médor, the rocking-horse, and all the rest of the menagerie; the diligence that brought me away from Paris; the heavily-jack-booted couriers in shiny hats and pigtails, and white breeches and short-tailed blue coats covered with silver buttons, who used to ride through Passy, on their way to and fro between the Tuileries and St. Cloud, on little, neighing, gray stallions, with bells round their necks and tucked-up tails, and beautiful heads like the horses' heads in the Elgin Marbles.

In my sketches they always looked and walked and trotted the same way: to the left, or westward as it would be on the map. M. le Major, Madame Seraskier, Médor, the diligences and couriers,

were all bound westward by common consent—all going to London, I suppose, to look after me, who was so dotingly fond of them.

Some of the boys used to admire these sketches and preserve them—some of the bigger boys would value my idealised (!) profiles of Madame Seraskier, with eyelashes quite an inch in length, and an eye three times the size of her mouth; and thus I made myself an artistic reputation for a while. But it did not last long, for my vein was limited; and soon another boy came to the school, who surpassed me in variety and interest of subject, and could draw profiles looking either way with equal ease; he is now a famous Academician, and seems to have preserved much of his old facility.¹)

* * * * *

Thus, on the whole, my school career was neither happy nor unhappy, nor did I distinguish myself in any way, nor (though I think I was rather liked than otherwise) make any great or lasting friendships; on the other hand, I did not in any way disgrace myself, nor make a single enemy that I knew of. Except that I grew out of the common tall and very strong, a more commonplace boy than I must have seemed (after my artistic vein had run itself dry) never went to a public school. So much for my outer life at Bluefriars.

But I had an inner world of my own, whose capital was Passy, whose fauna and flora were not to be surpassed by anything in Regent's Park or the Zoological Gardens.

It was good to think of it by day, to dream of it by night, *although I had not yet learned how to dream!*

There were soon other and less exclusive regions, however, which I shared with other boys of that bygone day. Regions of freedom and delight, where I heard the ominous crack of Deerslayer's rifle, and was friends with Chingachgook and his noble son—the last, alas! of the Mohicans; where Robin Hood and Friar Tuck made merry, and exchanged buffets with Lionhearted Richard under the greenwood tree; where Quentin Durward, happy squire of dames, rode midnightly by their side through the gibbet-and-gipsy-haunted forests of Touraine.... Ah! I had my dream of chivalry!

Happy times and climes! One must be a graycoated schoolboy, in the heart of foggy London, to know that nostalgia.

Not, indeed, but what London had its merits. Sam Weller lived there, and Charley Bates, and the irresistible Artful Dodger—and Dick Swiveller, and his adorable Marchioness, who divided my allegiance with Rebecca of York and sweet Diana Vernon.

¹ Note.—I have here omitted several pages, containing a description in detail of my cousin's life "at Bluefriars"; and also the portraits (not always flattering) which he has written of masters and boys, many of whom are still alive, and some of whom have risen to distinction; but these sketches would be without special interest unless the names were given as well, and that would be unadvisable for many reasons. Moreover, there is not much in what I have left out that has any bearing on his subsequent life, or the development of his character.

It was good to be an English boy in those days, and care for such friends as these! But it was good to be a French boy also; to have known Paris, to possess the true French feel of things—and the language.

Indeed, bilingual boys—boys double-tongued from their very birth (especially in French and English)—enjoy certain rare privileges. It is not a bad thing for a schoolboy (since a schoolboy he must be) to hail from two mother-countries if he can, and revel now and then in the sweets of homesickness for that of his two mother-countries in which he does not happen to be; and read *Les Trois Mousquetaires* in the cloisters of Bluefriars, or *Ivanhoe* in the dull, dusty prison-yard that serves for a playground in so many a French *lycée*!

Without listening, he hears all round him the stodgy language of every day, and the blatant shouts of his schoolfellows, in the voices he knows so painfully well—those shrill trebles, those cracked bary-tones and frog-like early basses! There they go, bleating and croaking and yelling; Dick, Tom, and Harry, or Jules, Hector and Alphonse! How vaguely tiresome and trivial and commonplace they are—those too familiar sounds; yet what an additional charm they lend to that so utterly different but equally familiar word-stream that comes silently flowing into his consciousness through his rapt eyes! The luxurious sense of mental exclusiveness and self-sequestration is made doubly complete by the contrast!

And for this strange enchantment to be well and thoroughly felt, both his languages must be native; not acquired, however perfectly. Every single word must have its roots deep down in a personal past so remote for him as to be almost unremembered; the very sound and printed aspect of each must be rich in childish memories of home; in all the countless, nameless, priceless associations that make it sweet and fresh and strong, and racy of the soil.

Oh! Porthos, Athos, and D'Artagnan—how I loved you, and your immortal squires, Planchet, Grimaud, Mousqueton! How well and wittily you spoke the language I adored—better even than good Monsieur Lallemand, the French master at Bluefriars, who could wield the most irregular subjunctives as if they had been mere feathers—trifles light as air.

Then came the Count of Monte-Cristo, who taught me (only too well) his terrible lesson of hatred and revenge; and *Les Mystères de Paris*, *Le Juif Errant*, and others.

But no words that I can think of in either mothertongue can express what I felt when first, through these tear-dimmed eyes of mine, and deep into my harrowed soul, came silently flowing the never-to-be-forgotten history of poor Esmeralda,¹ my first love! whose cruel fate filled with pity, sorrow, and indignation the last term of my life at school. It was the most important, the most

¹ *Notre Dame de Paris*, par Victor Hugo.

solemn, the most epoch-making event of my school life. I read it, re-read it, and read it again. I have not been able to read it since; it is rather long! but how well I remember it, and how short it seemed then! and oh! how short those well-spent hours!

That mystic word 'Ανάγκη! I wrote it on the flyleaf of all my books. I carved it on my desk. I intoned it in the echoing cloisters! I vowed I would make a pilgrimage to Notre Dame some day, that I might hunt for it in every hole and corner there, and read it with my own eyes, and feel it with my own forefinger.

And then that terrible prophetic song the old hag sings in the dark slum—how it haunted me, too! I could not shake it out of my troubled consciousness for months—

"Grouille, grève, grève, grouille,
File, File, ma quenouille:
File sa corde au bourreau
Qui siffle dans le préau."

.
'Ανάγκη! 'Ανάγκη! 'Ανάγκη!
.

Yes; it was worth while having been a little French boy just for a few years.

I especially found it so during the holidays, which I regularly spent at Bluefriars; for there was a French circulating library in Holborn, close by—a paradise. It was kept by a delightful old French lady who had seen better days, and was very kind to me, and did not lend me all the books I asked for!

Thus irresistibly beguiled by these light wizards of our degenerate age, I dreamed away most of my school life, utterly deaf to the voices of the older enchanters—Homer, Horace, Virgil—whom I was sent to school on purpose to make friends with; a deafness I lived to deplore, like other dunces, when it was too late.

.

And I was not only given to dream by day—I dreamed by night; my sleep was full of dreams—terrible nightmares, exquisite visions, strange scenes full of inexplicable reminiscence; all vague and incoherent, like all men's dreams that have hitherto been; *for I had not yet learned how to dream.*

A vast world, a dread and beautiful chaos, an everchanging kaleidoscope of life, too shadowy and dim to leave any lasting impression on the busy, waking mind; with here and there more vivid images of terror or delight, that one remembered for a few hours with a strange wonder and questioning, as Coleridge remembered his Abyssinian maid who played upon the dulcimer (a charming and most original combination).

The whole cosmos is in a man's brains—as much of it, at least,

as a man's brains will hold; perhaps it is nowhere else. And when sleep relaxes the will, and there are no earthly surroundings to distract attention—no duty, pain, or pleasure to compel it—riderless Fancy takes the bit in its teeth, and the whole cosmos goes mad and has its wild will of us.

Ineffable false joys, unspeakable false terror and distress, strange phantoms only seen as in a glass darkly, chase each other without rhyme or reason, and play hide-and-seek across the twilight field and through the dark recesses of our clouded and imperfect consciousness.

And the false terrors and distress, however unspeakable, are no worse than such real terrors and distress as are only too often the



NOTRE DAME DE PARIS.

waking lot of man, or even so bad; but the ineffable false joys transcend all possible human felicity while they last, and a little while it is! We wake, and wonder, and recall the slight foundation on which such ultra-human bliss has seemed to rest. What matters the foundation if but the bliss be there, and the brain has nerves to feel it?

Poor human nature, so richly endowed with nerves of anguish, so splendidly organised for pain and sorrow, is but slenderly equipped for joy.

What hells have we not invented for the after-life! Indeed, what hells we have often made of this, both for ourselves and others, and at really such a very small cost of ingenuity, after all!

Perhaps the biggest and most benighted fools have been the best hell-makers.

Whereas the best of our heavens is but a poor perfunctory conception, for all that the highest and cleverest amongst us have done

their very utmost to decorate and embellish it, and make life there seem worth living. So impossible it is to imagine or invent beyond the sphere of our experience.

Now, these dreams of mine (common to many) of the false but ineffable joys, are they not a proof that there exist in the human brain hidden capacities, dormant potentialities of bliss, unsuspected hitherto, to be developed some day, perhaps, and placed within the reach of all, wakers and sleepers alike?

A sense of ineffable joy, attainable at will, and equal in intensity and duration to (let us say) an attack of sciatica, would go far to equalise the sorrowful, onesided conditions under which we live.

But there is one thing which, as a schoolboy, I never dreamed—namely, that I, and one other holding a torch, should one day, by common consent, find our happiness in exploring these mysterious caverns of the brain; and should lay the foundations of order where only misrule had been before; and out of all those unreal, waste, and transitory realms of illusion, evolve a real, stable, and habitable world, which all who run may reach.

At last I left school for good, and paid a visit to my Uncle Ibbetson in Hopshire, where he was building himself a lordly new pleasure-house on his own land, as the old one he had inherited a year or two ago was no longer good enough for him.

It was an uninteresting coast on the German Ocean, without a rock, or a cliff, or a pier, or a tree; even without cold gray stones for the sea to break on—nothing but sand!—a bourgeois kind of sea, charmless in its best moods, and not very terrible in its wrath, except to a few stray fishermen whom it employed, and did not seem to reward very munificently.

Inland it was much the same. One always thought of the country as gray, until one looked and found that it was green; and then, if one were old and wise, one thought no more about it, and turned one's gaze inward. Moreover, it seemed to rain incessantly.

But it was the country and the sea, after Bluefriars and the cloisters—after Newgate, St. Bartholomew, and Smithfield.

And one could fish and bathe in the sea after all, and ride in the country, and even follow the hounds, a little later; which would have been a joy beyond compare if one had not been blessed with an uncle who thought one rode like a French tailor, and told one so, and mimicked one in the presence of charming young ladies who rode in perfection.

In fact, it was heaven itself by comparison, and would have remained so longer but for Colonel Ibbetson's efforts to make a gentleman of me—an English gentleman.

What is a gentleman? It is a grand old name; but what does it mean?

At one time, to say of a man that he is a gentleman, is to confer on him the highest title of distinction we can think of; even if we are speaking of a prince.

At another, to say of a man that he is *not* a gentleman is almost to stigmatise him as a social outcast, unfit for the company of his kind—even if it is only one haberdasher speaking of another.

Who is a gentleman, and yet who is not?

The Prince of Darkness was one, and so was Mr. John Halifax, if we are to believe those who knew them best; and so was one "Pelham," according to the late Sir Edward Bulwer, Earl of Lytton, etc.; and it certainly seemed as if he ought to know.

And I was to be another, according to Roger Ibbetson, Esquire, of Ibbetson Hall, late Colonel of the——, and it certainly seemed as if he ought to know too! The word was as constantly on his lips (when talking to me) as though, instead of having borne her Majesty's commission, he were a hairdresser's assistant who had just come into an independent fortune.

This course of tuition began pleasantly enough, before I left London, by his sending me to his tailors, who made me several beautiful suits; especially an evening suit, which has lasted me for life, alas! and these, after the uniform of the gray-coat school, were like an initiation to the splendours of freedom and manhood.

Colonel Ibbetson—or Uncle Ibbetson, as I used to call him—was my mother's first cousin; my grandmother, Mrs. Biddulph, was the sister of his father, the late Archdeacon Ibbetson, a very pious, learned, and exemplary divine, of good family.

But his mother (the Archdeacon's second wife) had been the only child and heiress of an immensely rich pawnbroker, by name Mendoza; a Portuguese Jew, with a dash of coloured blood in his veins besides, it was said; and indeed this remote African strain still showed itself in Uncle Ibbetson's thick lips, wide-open nostrils, and big black eyes with yellow whites—and especially in his long, splay, lark-heeled feet, which gave both himself and the best boot-maker in London a great deal of trouble.

Otherwise, and in spite of his ugly face, he was not without a certain soldier-like air of distinction, being very tall and powerfully built. He wore stays, and an excellent wig, for he was prematurely bald; and he carried his hat on one side, which (in my untutored eyes) made him look very much like a "*swell*," but not quite like a gentleman.

To wear your hat jauntily cocked over one eye, and yet "look like a gentleman"!

It can be done, I am told; and has been, and is even still! It is not, perhaps, a very lofty achievement—but such as it is, it requires a somewhat rare combination of social and physical gifts in the wearer; and the possession of either Semitic or African blood does not seem to be one of these.

Colonel Ibbetson could do a little of everything—sketch (espe-

cially a steamboat on a smooth sea, with beautiful thick smoke reflected in the water), play the guitar, sing chansonnettes and canzonets, write society verses, quote De Musset—

"Avez-vous vu dans Barcelone
Une Andalouse au sein bruni?"

He would speak French whenever he could, even to an English ostler, and then recollect himself suddenly, and apologise for his thoughtlessness; and even when he spoke English, he would embroider it with little twopenny French tags and idioms: "Pour



PORTRAIT CHARMANT.

tout potage"; "Nous avons changé tout cela"; "Que diable allait-il faire dans cette galère!" etc.; or Italian, "Chi lo sa?" "Pazienza!" "Ahimè!" or even Latin, "Eheu fugaces", and "Vidi tantum!" for he had been an Eton boy. It must have been very cheap Latin, for I could always understand it myself! He drew the line at German and Greek; fortunately, for so do I. He was a bachelor, and his domestic arrangements had been irregular, and I will not dwell upon them; but his house, as far as it went, seemed to promise better things.

His architect, Mr. Lintot, an extraordinary little man, full of

genius and quite self-made, became my friend and taught me to smoke, and drink gin and water.

He did his work well; but of an evening he used to drink more than was good for him, and rave about Shelley, his only poet. He would recite "The Skylark" (his only poem) with uncertain h's, and a rather cockney accent—

"Ail to thee bliihe sperrit!
Bird thou never wert,
That from 'eaven, or near it,
Po'rest thy full 'cart
In profuse strains of humpromotiated hart."

As the evening wore on his recitations became "low comic," and quite admirable for accent and humour. He could imitate all the actors in London (none of whom I had seen) so well as to transport me with delight and wonder; and all this with nobody but me for an audience, as we sat smoking and drinking together in his room at the "Ibbetson Arms."

I felt grateful to adoration.

Later still, he would become sentimental again; and dilate to me on the joys of his wedded life, on the extraordinary intellect and beauty of Mrs. Lintot. First he would describe to me the beauties of her mind, and compare her to "L. E. L." and Felicia Hemans. Then he would fall back on her physical perfections; there was nobody worthy to be compared to her in these—but I draw the veil.

He was very egotistical. Whatever he did, whatever he liked, whatever belonged to him, was better than anything else in the world; and he was cleverer than any one else, except Mrs. Lintot, to whom he yielded the palm; and then he would cheer up and become funny again.

In fact his self-satisfaction was quite extraordinary; and, what is more extraordinary still, it was not a bit offensive—at least, to me; perhaps because he was such a tiny little man; or because much of this vanity of his seemed to have no very solid foundation, for it was not of the gifts I most admired in him that he was vainest; or because it came out most when he was most tipsy, and genial tipsiness redeems so much; or else because he was most vain about things I should never have been vain about myself; and the most unpardonable vanity in others is that which is secretly our own, whether we are conscious of it or not.

And then he was the first funny man I had ever met. What a gift it is! He was always funny when he tried to be, whether one laughed with him or at him, and I loved him for it. Nothing on earth is more pathetically pitiable than the funny man when he still tries and succeeds no longer.

The moment Lintot's vein was exhausted, he had the sense to leave off and begin to cry, which was still funny; and then I would help him upstairs to his room, and he would jump out of his clothes

and into his bed and be asleep in a second, with the tears still trickling down his little nose—and even that was funny!

But next morning he was stern and alert and indefatigable, as though gin and poetry and conjugal love had never been, and fun were a capital crime.

Uncle Ibbetson thought highly of him as an architect, but not otherwise; he simply made use of him.

"He's a terrible little snob, of course, and hasn't got an *h* in his head" (as if *that* were a capital crime); "but he's very clever—look at that campanile—and then he's cheap, my boy, cheap."

There were several fine houses in fine parks not very far from Ibbetson Hall; but although Uncle Ibbetson appeared in name and wealth and social position to be on a par with their owners, he was not on terms of intimacy with any of them, or even of acquaintance, as far as I know, and spoke of them with contempt, as barbarians—people with whom he had nothing in common. Perhaps they, too, had found out this incompatibility, especially the ladies; for, school-boy as I was, I was not long in discovering that his manner toward those of the other sex was not always such as to please either them or their husbands or fathers or brothers. The way he looked at them was enough. Indeed, most of his lady friends and acquaintances through life had belonged to the *corps de ballet*, the *demi-monde*, etc.—not, I should imagine, the best school of manners in the world.

On the other hand, he was very friendly with some families in the town; the doctor's, the rector's, his own agent's (a broken-down brother officer and bosom friend, who had ceased to love him since he received his pay); and he used to take Mr. Lintot and me to parties there; and he was the life of those parties.

He sang little French songs, with no voice, but quite a good French accent, and told little anecdotes with no particular point, but in French and Italian (so that the point was never missed); and we all laughed and admired without quite knowing why, except that he was the lord of the manor.

On these festive occasions poor Lintot's confidence and power of amusing seemed to desert him altogether; he sat glum in a corner.

Though a radical and a sceptic, and a peace-at-any-price man, he was much impressed by the social status of the army and the church.

Of the doctor, a very clever and accomplished person, and the best educated man for miles around, he thought little; but the rector, the colonel, the poor captain, even, now a mere land-steward, seemed to fill him with respectful awe. And for his pains he was cruelly snubbed by Mrs. Captain and Mrs. Rector and their plain daughters, who little guessed what talents he concealed, and thought him quite a common little man, hardly fit to turn over the leaves of their music.

It soon became pretty evident that Ibbetson was very much smitten with a Mrs. Deane, the widow of a brewer, a very handsome

woman indeed, in her own estimation and mine, and everybody else's, except Mr. Lintot's, who said, "Pooh, you should see my wife!"

Her mother, Mrs. Glyn, excelled us all in her admiration of Colonel Ibbetson.

For instance, Mrs. Deane would play some common little waltz of the cheap kind that is never either remembered or forgotten, and Mrs. Glyn would exclaim, "*Is not that lovely?*"

And Ibbetson would say: "Charming! charming! Whose is it? Rossini's? Mozart's?"

"Why, no, my dear colonel. Don't you remember? *It's your own!*"

"Ah, so it is! I had quite forgotten." And general laughter and applause would burst forth at such a natural mistake on the part of our great man.

Well, I could neither play nor sing, and found it far easier by this time to speak English than French, especially to English people who were ignorant of any language but their own. Yet sometimes Colonel Ibbetson would seem quite proud of me.

"*Deux mètres, bien sonnés!*" he would say, alluding to my stature, "*et le profil d'Antinoïs!*" which he would pronounce without the two little dots on the *u*.

And afterward, if he had felt his evening a pleasant one, if he had sung all he knew, if Mrs. Deane had been more than usually loving and self-surrendering, and I had distinguished myself by skilfully turning over the leaves when her mother had played the piano, he would tell me, as we walked home together, that I "did credit to his name, and that I would make an excellent figure in the world as soon as I had *décrassé* myself; that I must get another dress suit from his tailor, just an eighth of an inch longer in the tails; that I should have a commission in his old regiment (the Eleventeenth Royal Bounders), a deuced crack cavalry regiment; and see the world and break a few hearts (it is not for nothing that our friends have pretty wives and sisters); and finally marry some beautiful young heiress of title, and make a home for him when he was a poor solitary old fellow. Very little would do for him: a crust of bread, a glass of wine and water, and a clean napkin, a couple of rooms, and an old piano and a few good books. For, of course, Ibbetson Hall would be mine and every penny he possessed in the world."

All this in confidential French—lest the very clouds should hear us—and with the familiar thee and thou of blood-relationship, which I did not care to return.

It did not seem to bode very serious intentions toward Mrs. Deane, and would scarcely have pleased her mother.

Or else, if something had crossed him, and Mrs. Deane had flirted outrageously with somebody else, and he had not been asked to sing (or somebody else had), he would assure me in good round English that I was the most infernal lout that ever disgraced a

drawing-room, or ate a man out of house and home, and that he was sick and ashamed of me. "Why can't you sing, you d——d French milksop? That d——d roulade-monger of a father of yours could sing fast enough, if he could do nothing else, confound him! Why can't you talk French, you infernal British booby? Why can't you hand round the tea and muffins, confound you! Why, twice Mrs. Glyn dropped her pocket-handkerchief and had to pick it up herself! What, 'at the other end of the room,' were you? Well, you should have skipped *across* the room, and picked it up, and handed it to her with a pretty speech, like a gentleman! When I was your age I was *always* on the lookout for ladies' pocket-handkerchiefs to drop—or their fans! I never missed *one*!"



ONE OF UNCLE IBBETSON'S WALTZES.

Then he would take me out to shoot with him (for it was quite essential that an English gentleman should be a sportsman)—a terrible ordeal to both of us.

A snipe that I did not want to kill in the least would sometimes rise and fly right and left like a flash of lightning, and I would miss it—always; and he would d—— me for a son of a confounded French Micawber, and miss the next himself, and get into a rage and thrash his dog, a pointer that I was very fond of. Once he thrashed her so cruelly that I saw scarlet, and nearly yielded to the impulse of emptying both my barrels in his broad back. If I had done so it would have passed for a mere mishap after all, and saved many future complications.

One day he pointed out to me a small bird pecking in a field—

an extremely pretty bird—I think it was a skylark—and whispered to me in his most sarcastic manner—

“Look here, you Peter without any salt, do you think, if you were to kneel down and rest your gun comfortably on this gate without making a noise, and take a careful aim, you could manage to shoot that bird *sitting*? I’ve heard of some Frenchman who would be equal to *that*!”

I said I would try, and, resting my gun as he told me, I carefully aimed a couple of yards above the bird’s head, and mentally ejaculating,

“*’Ail to thee blithe sperrit!*”

I fired both barrels (for fear of any after-mishap to Ibbetson), and the bird naturally flew away.

After this he never took me out shooting with him again; and, indeed, I had discovered to my discomfiture that I, the friend and admirer and would-be emulator of Natty Bumppo the Deer-slayer, I, the familiar of the last of the Mohicans and his scalp-lifting, father, could not bear the sight of blood—least of all, of blood shed by myself, and for my own amusement.

The only beast that ever fell to my gun during those shootings with Uncle Ibbetson was a young rabbit, and that more by accident than design, although I did not tell Uncle Ibbetson so.

As I picked it off the ground, and felt its poor little warm narrow chest, and the last beats of its heart under its weak ribs, and saw the blood on its fur, I was smitten with pity, shame, and remorse; and settled with myself that I would find some other road to English gentlemanhood than the slaying of innocent wild things whose happy life seems so well worth living.

I must eat them, I suppose, but I would never shoot them any more; my hands, at least, should be clean of blood henceforward.

Alas, the irony of fate!

.

The upshot of all this was that he confided to Mrs. Deane the task of licking his cub of a nephew into shape.

She took me in hand with right goodwill, and began by teaching me how to dance, that I might dance with her at the coming hunt ball; and I did so nearly all night, to my infinite joy and triumph, and to the disgust of Colonel Ibbetson, who could dance much better than I—to the disgust, indeed, of many smart men in red coats and black, for she was considered the belle of the evening.

Of course I fell, or fancied I fell, in love with her. To her mother’s extreme distress, she gave me every encouragement, partly for fun, partly to annoy Colonel Ibbetson, whom she had apparently grown to hate. And, indeed, from the way he often spoke of her to me (this trainer of English gentlemen), he well deserved that she should hate him. He never had the slightest intention of marrying her;

that is certain; and yet he had made her the talk of the place.

And here I may state that Ibbetson was one of those singular men who go through life afflicted with the mania that they are fatally irresistible to women.

He was never weary of pursuing them—not through any special love of gallantry for its own sake, I believe, but from the mere wish to appear as a *Don Giovanni* in the eyes of others. Nothing made him happier than to be seen whispering mysteriously in corners with the prettiest woman in the room. He did not seem to perceive



THE DANCING LESSON.

that for one woman silly or vain or vulgar enough to be flattered by his idiotic persecution, a dozen would loathe the very sight of him, and show it plainly enough.

This vanity had increased with years and assumed a very dangerous form. He became indiscreet, and, more disastrous still, he told lies! The very dead—the honoured and irreproachable dead—were not even safe in their graves. It was his revenge for forgotten slights.

He who kisses and tells, he who tells even though he has not kissed—what can be said for him, what should be done to him?

Ibbetson one day expiated this miserable craze with his life, and the man who took it—more by accident than design, it is true—has not yet found it in his heart to feel either compunction or regret.

* * * * *

So there was a great row between Ibbetson and myself. He

d——d and confounded and abused me in every way, and my father before me, and finally struck me; and I had sufficient self-command not to strike him back, but left him then and there with as much dignity as I could muster.

Thus unsuccessfully ended my brief experience of English country life—a little hunting and shooting and fishing, a little dancing and flirting; just enough of each to show me I was unfit for all.

A bitter-sweet remembrance, full of humiliation, but not altogether without charm. There was the beauty of sea and open sky and changing country weather, and the beauty of Mrs. Deane, who made a fool of me to revenge herself on Colonel Ibbetson for trying to make a fool of her; whereby he became the laughing-stock of the neighbourhood for at least nine days.

And I revenged myself on both—heroically, as I thought; though where the heroism comes in, and where the revenge, does not appear quite patent.

For I ran away to London, and enlisted in her Majesty's Household Cavalry, where I remained a twelvemonth, and was happy enough, and learned a great deal more good than harm.

Then I was bought out and articulated to Mr. Lintot, architect and surveyor: a conclave of my relatives agreeing to allow me ninety pounds a year for three years; then all hands were to be washed of me altogether.¹

.

So I took a small lodging in Pentonville, to be near Mr. Lintot, and worked hard at my new profession for three years, during which nothing of importance occurred in my outer life. After this Lintot employed me as a salaried clerk, and I do not think he had any reason to complain of me, nor did he make any complaint. I was worth my hire, I think, and something over; which I never got and never asked for.

Nor did I complain of him; for with all his little foibles of vanity, irascibility, and egotism, and a certain close fistedness, he was a good fellow and a very clever one.

His paragon of a wife was by no means the beautiful person he had made her out to be, nor did anybody but he seem to think her so.

She was a little older than himself; very large and massive,

¹ Note.—I have thought it better to leave out, in its entirety, my cousin's account of his short career as a private soldier. It consists principally of personal descriptions that are not altogether unprejudiced; he seems never to have quite liked those who were placed in authority above him, either at school or in the army.

But one of my husband's intimate friends, General —, who was cornet in the Life Guards in my poor cousin's time, writes me that "he remembers, him well, as far and away the tallest and handsomest lad in the whole regiment, of immense physical strength, unimpeachable good conduct, and a thorough gentleman from top to toe."

MADGE PLUNKET.

with stern but not irregular features, and a very high forehead; she had a slight tendency to baldness, and colourless hair that she wore in an austere curl on each side of her face, and a menacing little topknot on her occiput. She had been a Unitarian and a governess, was fond of good long words, like Dr. Johnson, and very censorious.

Her husband's occasional derelictions in the matter of grammar and accent must have been very trying to her!

She knew her own mind about everything under the sun, and expected that other people should know it too, and be of the same mind as herself. And yet she was not proud; indeed, she was a very dragon of humility, and had raised injured meekness to the rank of a militant virtue. And well she knew how to be master and mistress in her own house!

But with all this she was an excellent wife to Mr. Lintot and a devoted mother to his children, who were very plain and subdued (and adored their father); so that Lintot, who thought her Venus and Diana and Minerva in one, was the happiest man in all Pentonville.

And, on the whole, she was kind and considerate to me, and I always did my best to please her.

Moreover (a gift for which I could never be too grateful), she presented me with an old square piano, which had belonged to her mother, and had done duty in her schoolroom, till Lintot gave her a new one (for she was a highly cultivated musician of the severest classical type). It became the principal ornament of my small sitting-room, which it nearly filled, and on it I tried to learn my notes, and would pick out with one finger the old beloved melodies my father used to sing, and my mother play on the harp.

To sing myself was, it seems, out of the question; my voice (which I trust was not too disagreeable when I was content merely to speak) became as that of a bull-frog under a blanket whenever I strove to express myself in song; my larynx refused to produce the notes I held so accurately in my mind, and the result was disaster.

On the other hand, in my mind I could sing most beautifully. Once on a rainy day, inside an Islington omnibus, I mentally sang "Adelaida" with the voice of Mr. Sims Reeves—an unpardonable liberty to take; and although it is not for me to say so, I sang it even better than he, for I made myself shed tears—so much so that a kind old gentleman sitting opposite seemed to feel for me very much.

I also had the faculty of remembering any tune I once heard, and would whistle it correctly ever after—even one of Uncle Ibbetson's waltzes!

As an instance of this, worth recalling, one night I found myself in Guildford Street, walking in the same direction as another belated individual (only on the other side of the road), who, just as the moon came out of a cloud, was moved to whistle.

He whistled exquisitely, and, what was more, he whistled quite the most beautiful tune I had ever heard. I felt all its changes and modulations, its majors and minors, just as if a whole band had been there to play the accompaniment, so cunning and expressive a whistler was he.

And so entranced was I that I made up my mind to cross over and ask him what it was—"Your melody or your life!" But he suddenly stopped at No. 48, and let himself in with his key before I could prefer my humble request.

Well, I went whistling that tune all next day, and for many days after, without ever finding out what it was, till one evening, happening to be at the Lintots, I asked Mrs. Lintot (who happened to be at the piano) if she knew it, and began to whistle it once more. To my delight and surprise she straightway accompanied it all through (a wonderful condescension in so severe a purist), and I did not make a single wrong note.

"Yes," said Mrs. Lintot, "it's a pretty, catchy little tune—of a kind to achieve immediate popularity."

Now, I apologise humbly to the reader for this digression; but if he be musical he will forgive me, for that tune was the "Serenade" of Schubert, and I had never even heard Schubert's name!

And having thus duly apologised, I will venture to transgress and digress anew, and mention here a kind of melodic malady, a singular obsession to which I am subject, and which I will call unconscious musical cerebration.

I am never without some tune running in my head—never for a moment; not that I am always aware of it; existence would be insupportable if I were. What part of my brain sings it, or rather in what part of my brain it sings itself, I cannot imagine—probably in some useless corner full of cobwebs and lumber that is fit for nothing else.

But it never leaves off; now it is one tune, now another; now a song *without* words, now *with*; sometimes it is near the surface, so to speak, and I am vaguely conscious of it as I read or work, or talk or think; sometimes to make sure it is there I have to dive for it deep into myself, and I never fail to find it after a while, and bring it up to the top. It is the "Carnival of Venice," let us say; then I let it sink again, and it changes without my knowing; so that when I take another dive the "Carnival of Venice" has become "Il Mio Tesoro," or the "Marseillaise," or "Pretty Little Polly Perkins of Paddington Green." And Heaven knows what tunes, unheard and unperceived, this internal barrel-organ has been grinding meanwhile.

Sometimes it intrudes itself so persistently as to become a nuisance, and the only way to get rid of it is to whistle or sing myself. For instance, I may be mentally reciting for my solace and delectation some beloved lyric like "The Waterfowl," or "Tears, Idle Tears," or "Break, Break, Break;" and all the while, between the lines

this fiend of a subcerebral vocalist, like a wandering minstrel in a distant square, insists on singing, "Cheer, Boys, Cheer," or, "Tommy, make room for your uncle" (tunes I cannot abide), with words, accompaniment, and all, complete, and not quite so refined an accent as I could wish; so that I have to leave off my recitation and whistle "J'ai du Bon Tabac" in quite a different key to exorcise it.

But this, at least, I will say for this never still small voice of mine: its intonation is always perfect; it keeps ideal time; and its quality, though rather thin and somewhat nasal and quite peculiar, is not unsympathetic. Sometimes, indeed (as in that Islington omnibus), I can compel it to imitate, *à s'y méprendre*, the tones of some singer I have recently heard, and thus make for myself a ghostly music which is not to be despised.

Occasionally, too, and quite unbidden, it would warble little impromptu inward melodies of my own composition, which often seemed to me extremely pretty, old-fashioned, and quaint; but one is not a fair judge of one's own productions, especially during the heat of inspiration; and I had not the means of recording them, as I had never learned the musical notes. What the world has lost!

Now whose this small voice was I did not find out till many years later, *for it was not mine!*

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In spite of such rare accomplishments and resources within myself, I was not a happy or contented young man; nor had my discontent in it anything of the divine.

I disliked my profession, for which I felt no particular aptitude, and would fain have followed another—poetry, science, literature, music, painting, sculpture; for all of which I most unblushingly thought myself better fitted by the gift of nature.

I disliked Pentonville, which, although clean, virtuous, and respectable, left much to be desired on the score of shape, colour, romantic tradition, and local charm; and I would sooner have lived anywhere else: in the Champs Elysées, let us say—yes, indeed, even on the fifth branch of the third tree on the left-hand side as you leave the Arc de Triomphe, like one of those classical heroes in Henri Murger's *Vie de Bohème*.

I disliked my brother apprentices, and did not get on well with them, especially a certain very clever but vicious and deformed youth called Judkins, who seemed to have conceived an aversion for me from the first; he is now an associate of the Royal Academy. They thought I gave myself airs because I did not share in their dissipations; such dissipations as I could have afforded would have been cheap and nasty indeed.

Yet such pothouse dissipation seemed to satisfy them, since they took not only a pleasure in it, but a pride.

They even took a pride in a sick headache, and liked it, if it were the result of a debauch on the previous night; and were as pom-

piously mock-modest about a black eye, got in a squabble at the Argyll Rooms, as if it had been the Victoria Cross. To pass the night in a police cell was such glory that it was worth while pretending they had done so when it was untrue.

They looked upon me as a muff, a milksop, and a prig, and felt the greatest contempt for me; and if they did not openly show it, it was only because they were not quite so fond of black eyes as they made out.

So I left them to their inexpensive joys, and betook myself to pursuits of my own, among others to the cultivation of my body, after methods I had learned in the Life Guards. I belonged to a gymnastic and fencing and boxing club, of which I was a most assiduous frequenter; a more persevering dumb-beller and Indian-clubber never was, and I became in time an all-round athlete, as wiry and lean as a greyhound, just under fifteen stone, and four inches over six feet in height, which was considered very tall thirty years ago; especially in Pentonville, where the distinction often brought me more contumely than respect.

Altogether a most formidable person, but that I was of a timid nature, afraid to hurt, and the peaceablest creature in the world.

My old love for slums revived, and I found out and haunted the worst in London. They were very good slums, but they were not the slums of Paris—they manage these things better in France.

Even Cow Cross (where the Metropolitan Railway now runs between King's Cross and Farringdon Street)—Cow Cross, that whilom labyrinth of slaughter-houses, gin-shops, and thieves' dens, with the famous Fleet Ditch running underneath it all the while, lacked the fascination and mystery of mediæval romance. There were no memories of such charming people as *Le roi des Truands* and *Gringoire* and *Esmeralda*; with a sigh one had to fall back on visions of Fagin and Bill Sykes and Nancy.

Quelle dégringolade!

And as to the actual denizens! One gazed with a dull, wondering pity at the poor, pale, rickety children; the slatternly, coarse women who never smiled (except when drunk); the dull, morose, miserable men. How they lacked the grace of French deformity, the ease and lightness of French depravity, the sympathetic distinction of French grotesqueness. How unutterable they were, who preferred the fist to the noiseless and insidious knife! who fought with their hands instead of their feet, quite loyally; and reserved the kick of their hobnailed boots for their recalcitrant wives!

And then there was no Morgue; one missed one's Morgue badly.

And Smithfield! It would split me truly to the heart (as *M. le Major* used to say) to watch the poor beasts that came on certain days to make a short station in that hideous cattle-market, on their way to the slaughter-house.

What bludgeons have I seen descend on beautiful, bewildered, dazed, meek eyes, so thickly fringed against the country sun; on

soft, moist, tender nostrils that clouded the poisonous reek with a fragrance of the far-off fields! What torture of silly sheep and genially cynical pigs!

The very dogs seemed demoralised, and brutal as their masters.

And there one day I had an adventure, a dirty bout at fisticuffs, most humiliating in the end for me, and which showed that chivalry is often its own reward, like virtue, even when the chivalrous are young and big and strong, and have learned to box.

A brutal young drover wantonly kicked a sheep, and, as I thought, broke her hind leg, and in my indignation I took him by the ear and flung him round on to a heap of mud and filth. He rose and squared at me in a most plucky fashion; he hardly came up to my chin, and I refused to fight him. A crowd collected round us, and as I tried to explain to the bystanders the cause of our quarrel, he managed to hit me in the face with a very muddy fist.

"Bravo, little un!" shouted the crowd, and he squared up again. I felt wretchedly ashamed, and warded off all his blows, telling him that I could not hit him or I should kill him.

"Yah!" shouted the crowd again; "go it, little un! Let 'im 'ave it! The long un's showing the white feather," etc., and finally I gave him a slight backhander that made his nose bleed and seemed to demoralise him completely. "Yah!" shouted the crowd; "'it one yer own size!"

I looked round in despair and rage, and picking out the biggest man I could see, said, "Are you big enough?" The crowd roared with laughter.

"Well, guv'ner, I dessay I might do at a pinch," he replied; and I tried to slap his face, but missed it, and received such a tremendous box on the ear that I was giddy for a second or two, and when I recovered I found him still grinning at me. I tried to hit him again and again, but always missed; and at last, without doing me any particular damage, he laid me flat three times running on to the very heap where I had flung the drover, the crowd applauding madly. Dazed, hatless, and panting, and covered with filth, I stared at him in hopeless impotence. He put out his hand, and said, "You're all right, ain't yer, guv'ner? I 'ope I 'aven't 'urt yer! My name's Tom Sayers. If you'd a 'it me, I should 'a' gone down like a ninepin, and I ain't so sure as I should ever 'ave got up again."

He was to become the most famous fighting man in England!

I wrung his hand and thanked him, and offered him a sovereign, which he refused; and then he led me into a room in a public-house close by, where he washed and brushed me down, and insisted on treating me to a glass of brandy-and-water.

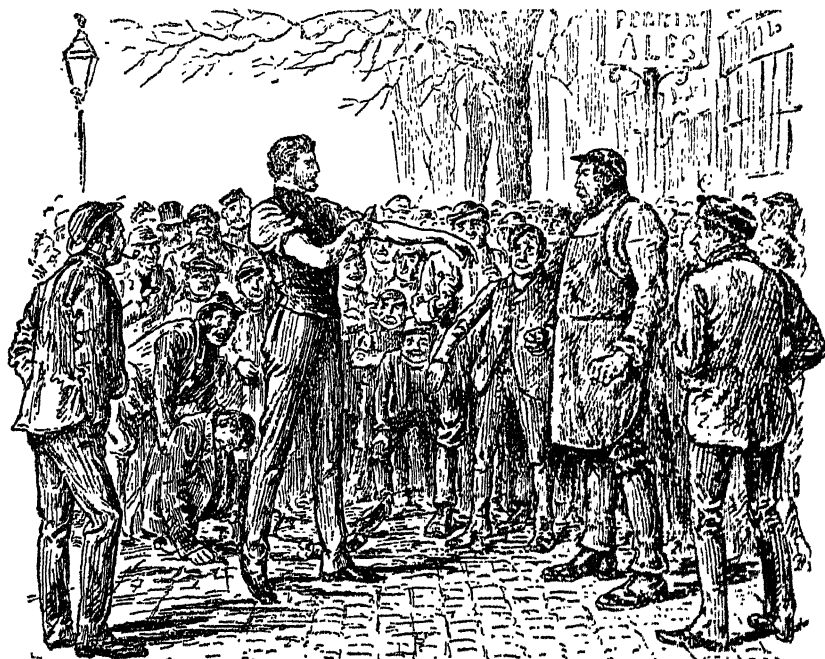
I have had a fondness for fighting-men ever since, and a respect for the noble science I had never felt before. He was many inches shorter than I, and did not look at all the Hercules he was.

He told me I was the strongest-built man for a youngster that he had ever seen, barring that I was "rather leggy." I do not know

if he was sincere or not, but no possible compliment could have pleased me more. Such is the vanity of youth.

And here, although it savours somewhat of vaingloriousness, I cannot resist the temptation of relating another adventure of the same kind, but in which I showed to greater advantage.

It was on a Boxing-day (oddly enough), and I was returning with Lintot and one of his boys from a walk in the Highgate Fields. As we plodded our dirty way homeward through the Caledonian



THE BIG DRAYMAN.

Road we were stopped by a crowd outside a public-house. A gigantic drayman (they always seem bigger than they really are) was squaring up to a poor drunken lout of a navvy not half his size, who had been put up to fight him, and who was quite incapable of even an attempt at self-defence; he could scarcely lift his arms. I thought at first it was only horse-play; and as little Joe Lintot wanted to see, I put him up on my shoulder, just as the drayman, who had been drinking, but was not drunk, and had a most fiendishly brutal face, struck the poor tipsy wretch with all his might between the eyes and felled him (it was like poleaxing a bullock), to the delight of the crowd.

Little Joe, a very gentle and sensitive boy, began to cry; and his father, who had the pluck of a bullterrier, wanted to interfere,

in spite of his diminutive stature. I was also beside myself with indignation, and pulling off my coat and hat, which I gave to Lintot, I made my way to the drayman, who was offering to fight any three men in the crowd, an offer that met with no response.

"Now, then, you cowardly skunk!" I said, tucking up my shirt sleeves; "stand up, and I will knock every tooth down your ugly throat."

His face went the colours of a mottled Stilton cheese, and he asked what I meddled with him for. A ring formed itself, and I felt the sympathy of the crowd *with me* this time—a very agreeable sensation!

"Now, then, up with your arms. I'm going to kill you!"

"I ain't going to fight you, mister; I ain't going to fight *nobody*. Just you let me alone."

"Oh yes, you are, or else you're going down on your marrow-bones to beg pardon for being a brutal, cowardly skunk;" and I gave him a slap on the face that rang like a pistol shot—a most finished, satisfactory, and successful slap this time! My fingertips tingle at the bare remembrance.

He tried to escape, but was held opposite to me. He began to snivel and whimper, and said he had never meddled with me, and asked what should I meddle with him for?

"Then down on your knees—quick—this instant!" and I made as if I were going to begin serious business at once and no mistake.

So down he plumped on his knees, and there he actually fainted from sheer excess of emotion.

As I was helped on with my coat, I tasted, for once in my life, the sweets of popularity, and knew what it was to be the idol of a mob.

Little Joey Lintot and his brother and sisters, who had never held me in any particular regard before that I knew of, worshipped me from that day forward.

And I should be insincere if I did not confess that on that one occasion I was rather pleased with myself, although the very moment I stood opposite the huge, hulking, beer-sodden brute (who had looked so formidable from afar), I felt, with a not unpleasant sense of relief, that he did not stand a chance. He was only big, and even at that I beat him.

The real honours of the day belonged to Lintot, who, I am convinced, was ready to act the David to that Goliath. He had the real stomach for fighting, which I lacked, as very tall men are often said to do.

And that, perhaps, is why I have made so much of my not very wonderful prowess on that occasion; not, indeed, that I am physically a coward—at least, I do not think so. If I thought I were I should avow it with no more shame than I should avow that I had a bad digestion, or a weak heart, which makes cowards of us all.

It is that I hate a row, and violence, and bloodshed, even from a nose—any nose, either my own or my neighbour's.

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There are slums at the east end of London that many fashionable people know something of by this time; I got to know them by heart. In addition to the charm of the mere slum, there was the eternal fascination of the seafaring element; of Jack ashore—a lovable creature who touches nothing but what he adorns it in his own peculiar fashion.

I constantly haunted the docks, where the smell of tar and the sight of ropes and masts filled me with unutterable longings for the sea—for distant lands—for anywhere but where it was my fate to be.

I talked to ship captains and mates and sailors, and heard many marvellous tales, as the reader may well believe, and framed for myself visions of cloudless skies, and sapphire seas, and coral reefs; and groves of spice, and dusky youths in painted plumage roving, and friendly isles where a lovely half-clad, barefooted Netha would wave her torch, and lead me, her Torquil, by the hand through caverns of bliss!

Especially did I haunt a wharf by London Bridge, from whence two steamers—the *Seine* and the *Dolphin*, I believe—started on alternate days for Boulogne-sur-Mer.

I used to watch the happy passengers bound for France, some of them, in their holiday spirits, already fraternising together on the sunny deck, and fussing with camp-stools and magazines and novels and bottles of bitter beer, or retiring before the funnel to smoke the pipe of peace.

The sound of the boiler getting up steam—what delicious music it was! Would it ever get up steam for me? The very smell of the cabin, the very feel of the brass gangway and the brass-bound, oil-clothed steps, were delightful; and downstairs, on the snowy cloth, were the cold beef and ham, the beautiful fresh mustard, the bottles of pale ale and stout. O happy travellers, who could afford all this, and France into the bargain!

Soon would a large white awning make the afterdeck a paradise, from which, by and by, to watch the quickly gliding panorama of the Thames. The bell would sound for non-passengers like me to go ashore.—“*Que diable allait-il faire dans cette galère!*” as Uncle Ibbetson would have said. The steamer, disengaging itself from the wharf with a pleasant yohoing of manly throats and a slow, intermittent plashing of the paddle-wheels, would carefully pick its sunny eastward way among the small craft of the river, while a few handkerchiefs were waved in a friendly, make-believe farewell—*auf wiedersehen!*

Oh! to stand by that unseasonably sou'-westered man at the wheel, and watch St. Paul's and London Bridge and the Tower

of London fade out of sight—never, never to see them again! No *auf wiedersehen* for me!

Sometimes I would turn my footsteps westward and fill my hungry, jealous eyes with a sight of the gay summer procession in Hyde Park, or listen to the band in Kensington Gardens, and see beautiful, well-dressed women, and hear their sweet, refined voices and happy



THE BOULOGNE STEAMER.

laughter; and a longing would come into my heart more passionate than my longing for the sea and France and distant lands, and quite as unutterable. I would even forget Neuha and her torch.

After this it was a dreary downfall to go and dine for tenpence all by myself, and finish up with a book at my solitary lodgings in Pentonville. The book would not let itself be read; it sulked and had to be laid down, for "Beautiful woman! beautiful girl!" spelled themselves between me and the printed page. Translate me those words into French, O ye who can even render Shakespeare into French Alexandrines—"Belle femme? Belle fille?" Ha! ha!

If you want to get as near it as you can, you will have to write, "Belle Anglaise," or "Belle Américaine"; only then will you be understood, even in France!

Ah! elle était bien belle, Madame Seraskier!

At other times, more happily inspired, I would slake my thirst for nature by long walks into the country. Hampstead was my Passy—the Leg-of-Mutton Pond my Mare d'Auteuil; Richmond was my St. Cloud, with Kew Gardens for a Bois de Boulogne; and Hampton Court made a very fair Versailles—how incomparably fairer, even a pupil of Lintot's should know.

And after such healthy fatigue and fragrant impressions the tenpenny dinner had a better taste, the little front parlour in Pentonville was more like a home, the book more like a friend.

For I read all I could get in English or French. Novels, travels, history, poetry, science—everything came as grist to that most melancholy mill, my mind.

I tried to write; I tried to draw; I tried to make myself an inner life apart from the sordid, commonplace ugliness of my outer one—a private oasis of my own; and to raise myself a little, if only mentally, above the circumstances in which it had pleased the Fates to place me.¹

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It goes without saying that, like many thoughtful youths of a melancholy temperament, impecunious and discontented with their lot, and much given to the smoking of strong tobacco on an empty stomach), I continuously brooded on the problems of existence—free-will and determinism, the whence and why and whither of man, the origin of evil, the immortality of the soul, the futility of life, etc., and made myself very miserable over such questions.

Often the inquisitive passer-by, had he peeped through the blinds of No.—Wharton Street, Pentonville, late at night, would have been rewarded by the touching spectacle of a huge, raw-boned ex-private in her Majesty's Life Guards, with his head bowed over the black and yellow keyboard of a venerable square pianoforte (on which he could not play), dropping the bitter tear of loneliness and *Weltschmerz* combined.

It never once occurred to me to seek relief in the bosom of any church.

Some types are born and not made. I was a born "infidel"; if ever there was a congenital agnostic, one agnostically constituted

¹ *Note*.—It is with great reluctance that I now come to my cousin's account of the deplorable opinions he held, at that period of his life, on the most important subject that can ever engross the mind of man.

I have left out *much*, but I feel that in suppressing it altogether I should rob his sad story of all its moral significance; for it cannot be doubted that most of his unhappiness is attributable to the defective religious training of his childhood, and that his parents (otherwise the best and kindest people I have ever known) incurred a terrible responsibility when they determined to leave him "unbiassed", as he calls it, at that tender, susceptible age when the mind is

"Wax to receive, and marble to retain."

MADGE PLUNKET,

from his very birth, it was I. Not that I had ever heard such an expression as agnosticism; it is an invention of late years....

"J'avais fait de la prose toute ma vie sans le savoir!"

But almost the first conscious dislike I can remember was for the black figure of the priest, and there were several of these figures in Passy.

Monsieur le Major called them *maîtres corbeaux*, and seemed to hold them in light esteem. Dr. Seraskier hated them; his gentle Catholic wife had grown to distrust them. My loving heretic mother loved them not; my father, a Catholic born and bred, had an equal aversion. They had persecuted his gods—the thinkers, philosophers, and scientific discoverers—Galileo, Bruno, Copernicus; and brought to his mind the cruelties of the Holy Inquisition, the Massacre of St. Bartholomew; and I always pictured them as burning little heretics alive if they had their will—Eton jackets, white chimney-pot hats, and all!

I have no doubt they were in reality the best and kindest of men.

The parson (and parsons were not lacking in Pentonville) was not so insidiously repellent as the blue-checked, blue-chinned Passy priest; but he was by no means to me a picturesque or sympathetic apparition, with his weddedness, his whiskers, his black trousers, his frockcoat, his tall hat, his little white tie, his consciousness of being a "gentleman" by profession. Most unattractive, also, were the cheap brand-new churches wherein he spoke the word to his dreary-looking Sunday-clad flock, with scarcely one of whom his wife would have sat down to dinner—especially if she had been chosen from among them!

To watch that flock pouring in of a Sunday morning, or afternoon, or evening, at the summons of those bells, and pouring out again after the long service, and banal, perfunctory sermon, was depressing. Weekdays, in Pentonville, were depressing enough; but Sundays were depressing beyond words, though nobody seemed to think so but myself. Early training had conditioned them.

I have outlived these physical antipathies of my salad days; even the sight of an Anglican bishop is no longer displeasing to me; on the contrary; and I could absolutely rejoice in the beauty of a cardinal.

Indeed, I am now friends with both a parson and a priest, and do not know which of the two I love and respect the most. They ought to hate me, but they do not; they pity me too much, I suppose. I am too negative to rouse in either the deep theological hate; and all the little hate that the practice of love and charity has left in their kind hearts is reserved for each other—an unquenchable hate in which they seem to glory, and which rages all the more that it has to be concealed. It saddens me to think that I am a bone of contention between them!

And yet, for all my unbelief, the Bible was my favourite book, and the Psalms my adoration; and most truly can I affirm that my

mental attitude has ever been one of reverence and humility.

But every argument that has ever been advanced against Christianity (and I think I know them all by this time) had risen spontaneously and unprompted within me, and they have all seemed to me unanswerable, and indeed, as yet, unanswered. Nor had any creed of which I ever heard appeared to me either credible or attractive or even sensible, but for the central figure of the Deity—a Deity that in no case could ever be mine.

The awe-inspiring and unalterable conception that had wrought itself into my consciousness, whether I would or no, was that of a Being infinitely more abstract, remote, and inaccessible than any the genius of mankind has ever evolved after its own image and out of the needs of its own heart—inscrutable, unthinkable, unspeakable; above all human passions, beyond the reach of any human appeal; One upon whose attributes it was futile to speculate—One whose name was *It*, not *He*.

The thought of total annihilation was uncongenial, but had no terror.

Even as a child I had shrewdly suspected that hell was no more than a vulgar threat for naughty little boys and girls, and heaven than a vulgar bribe, from the casual way in which either was meted out to me as my probable portion, by servants and such people, according to the way I behaved. Such things were never mentioned to me by either my father or mother, or M. le Major, or the Seraskiers—the only people in whom I trusted.

But for the bias against the priest, I was left unbiassed at that tender and susceptible age. I had learned my catechism and read my Bible, and used to say the Lord's Prayer as I went to bed, and "God bless papa and mamma", and the rest, in the usual perfunctory manner.

Never a word against religion was said in my hearing by those few on whom I had pinned my childish faith; on the other hand, no such importance was attached to it, apparently, as was attached to the virtues of truthfulness, courage, generosity, self-denial, politeness, and especially consideration for others, high or low human and animal alike.

I imagine that my parents must have compromised the matter between them, and settled that I should work out all the graver problems of existence for myself, when I came to a thinking age, out of my own conscience, and such knowledge of life as I should acquire, and such help as they would no doubt have given me, according to their lights, had they survived.

I did so, and made myself a code of morals to live by, in which religion had but a small part.

For me there was but one sin, and that was cruelty, because I hated it; though Nature, for inscrutable purposes of her own, almost teaches it as a virtue. All sins that did not include cruelty were merely sins against health, or taste, or common sense, or public expediency.

Free-will was impossible. We could only *seem* to will freely, and that only within the limits of a small triangle, whose sides were heredity, education, and circumstance—a little geometrical arrangement of my own, of which I felt not a little proud, although it does not quite go on all-fours; perhaps because it is only a triangle.

That is, we could will fast enough—*too* fast; but could not will *how* to will: fortunately, for we were not fit as yet, and for a long time to come, to be trusted, constituted as we are!

Even the characters of a novel must act according to the nature, training, and motives their creator, the novelist, has supplied them with, or we put the novel down, and read something else; for human nature must be consistent with itself in fiction as well as in fact. Even in its madness there must be a method, so how could the will be free?

To pray for any personal boon or remission of evil—to bend the knee, or lift one's voice in praise or thanksgiving for any earthly good that had befallen one, either through inheritance, or chance, or one's own successful endeavour—was in my eyes simply futile; but, putting its futility aside, it was an act of servile presumption, of wheedling impertinence, not without suspicion of a lively sense of favours to come.

It seemed to me as though the Jews—a superstitious and business-like people, who know what they want and do not care how they get it—must have taught us to pray like that.

It was not the sweet simple child, innocently beseeching that to-morrow might be fine for its holiday, or that Santa Claus would be generous: it was the cunning trader, fawning, flattering propitiating, bribing with fulsome sycophantic praise (an insult in itself), as well as burnt-offerings; working for his own success here and hereafter, and his enemy's confounding.

It was the grovelling of the dog, without the dog's single-hearted love, stronger than even its fear or its sense of self-interest.

What an attitude for one whom God had made after His own image—even toward his Maker!

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The only permissible prayer was a prayer for courage or resignation for that was a prayer turned inward, an appeal to what is best in ourselves—our honour, our stoicism, our self-respect.

And for a small detail, grace before and after meals seemed to me especially self-complacent and iniquitous when there were so many with scarcely ever a meal to say grace for. The only decent and proper grace was to give half of one's meal away—not, indeed, that I was in the habit of doing so! But, at least, I had the grace to reproach myself for my want of charity, and that was my only grace.

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Fortunately, since we had no free-will of our own, the tendency

PETER IBBETSON

impelled us was upward, like the sparks, and bore us with y-nilly—the good and the bad, and the worst and the best.

By seeing this clearly, and laying it well to heart, the motive was supplied to us for doing all we could in furtherance of that upward tendency—*pour aider le bon Dieu*—that we might rise the faster and reach Him the sooner, if He were! And when once the human will has been set going, like a rocket or a clock or a steam-engine, and in the right direction, what can it not achieve?

We should in time control circumstance instead of being controlled thereby; education would day by day become more adapted to one consistent end; and finally, conscience-stricken, we should guide heredity with our own hands instead of leaving it to blind chance; unless, indeed, a well-instructed paternal government wisely took the reins, and only sanctioned the union of people who were thoroughly in love with each other, after due and careful elimination of the unfit.

Thus, cruelty should at least be put into harness, and none of its valuable energy wasted on wanton experiment, as it is by Nature.

And thus, as the boy is father to the man, should the human race one day be father to—what?

That is just where my speculations would arrest themselves; that was the x of a sum in rule of three, not to be worked out by Peter Ibbetson, Architect and Surveyor, Wharton Street, Pentonville.

As the orang-outang is to Shakespeare, so is Shakespeare to . . . x .

As the female chimpanzee is to the Venus of Milo, so is the Venus of Milo to . . . x ?

Finally, multiply these two x 's by each other, and try to conceive the result!

Such was, crudely, the simple creed I held at this time; and, such as it was, I had worked it all out for myself, with no help from outside—a poor thing, but mine own; or, as I expressed it in the words of De Musset, "*Mon verre n'est pas grand—mais je bois dans mon verre.*"

For though such ideas were in the air, like wholesome clouds, they had not yet condensed themselves into printed words for the million. People did not dare to write about these things, as they do at present, in popular novels and cheap magazines, that all who run may read, and learn to think a little for themselves, and honestly say what they think, without having to dread a howl of execration, clerical and lay.

And it was not only that I thought like this and could not think otherwise; it was that I felt like this and could not feel otherwise; and I should have appeared to myself as wicked, weak, and base had I ever even *desired* to think or feel otherwise, however personally despairing of this life—a traitor to what I jealously guarded as my best instincts.

And yet to me the faith of others, if but unaggressive, humble, and sincere, had often seemed touching and pathetic, and sometimes even beautiful, as childish things seem sometimes beautiful, even in those who are no longer children and should have put them away. It had caused many heroic lives, and rendered many obscure lives blameless and happy; and then its fervour and passion seemed to burn with a lasting flame.

At brief moments now and then, and especially in the young, unfaith can be as fervent and as passionate as faith, and just as narrow and unreasonable, as I found; but alas! its flame was intermittent, and its light was not a kindly light.

It had no food for babes; it could not comfort the sick or sorry; nor resolve into submissive harmony the inner discords of the soul; nor compensate us for our own failures and shortcomings; nor make up to us in any way for the success and prosperity of others who did not choose to think as we did.

It was without balm for wounded pride, or stay for weak despondency, or consolation for bereavement; its steep and rugged thoroughfares led to no promised land of beatitude, and there were no soft resting-places by the way.

Its only weapon was steadfastness; its only shield, endurance; its earthly hope, the common weal; its earthly prize, the opening of all roads to knowledge, and the release from a craven inheritance of fear; its final guerdon—sleep? Who knows?

Sleep was not bad.

So that simple, sincere, humble, devout, earnest, fervent, passionate, and over-conscientious young unbelievers like myself had to be very strong and brave and self-reliant (which I was not), and very much in love with what they conceived to be the naked Truth (a figure of doubtful personal attractions at first sight), to tread the ways of life with that unvarying cheerfulness, confidence, and serenity which the believer claims as his own special and particular apanage.

So much for my profession of unfaith, shared (had I but known it) by many much older and wiser and better educated than I, and only reached by them after great sacrifice of long-cherished illusions, and terrible pangs of soul-questioning—a struggle and a wrench that I was spared through my kind parents' thoughtfulness when I was a little boy.

* * * * *

It thus behoved me to make the most of this life; since, for all I knew, or believed, or even hoped to the contrary, to-morrow we must die.

Not, indeed, that I might eat and drink and be merry; heredity and education had not inclined me that way, I suppose, and circumstances did not allow it; but that I might try and live up to the best ideal I could frame out of my own conscience and the past teaching

of mankind. And man, whose conception of the Infinite and divine has been so inadequate, has furnished us with such human examples (ancient and modern, Hebrew, Pagan, Buddhist, Christian, Agnostic, and what not) as the best of us can only hope to follow at a distance.

I would sometimes go to my morning's work, my heart elate with lofty hope and high resolve.

How easy and simple it seemed to lead a life without fear, or reproach, or self-seeking, or any sordid hope of personal reward, either here or hereafter!—a life of stoical endurance, invincible patience and meekness, indomitable cheerfulness and self-denial!

After all, it was only for another forty or fifty years at the most, and what was that? And after that—*que sçais-je?*

The thought was inspiring indeed!

By luncheon-time (and luncheon consisted of an Abernethy biscuit and a glass of water, and several pipes of shag tobacco, cheap and rank) some subtle change would come over the spirit of my dream.

Other people did not have high resolves. Some people had very bad tempers, and rubbed one very much the wrong way....

What a hideous place was Pentonville to slave away one's life in!....

What a grind it was to be for ever making designs for little new shops in Rosoman Street, and not making them well, it seemed!....

Why should a squinting, pock-marked, bow-legged, hunch-backed little Judkins (a sight to make a recruiting sergeant shudder) for ever taunt one with having enlisted as a private soldier?....

And then why should one be sneeringly told to "hit a fellow one's own size," merely because, provoked beyond endurance, one just grabbed him by the slack of his trousers and gently shook him out of them on to the floor, terrified but quite unhurt?....

And so on, and so on; constant little pin-pricks, sordid humiliations, uglinesses, meannesses, and dirt, that called forth in resistance all that was lowest and least commendable in one's self.

One has attuned one's nerves to the leading of a forlorn hope, and a gnat gets into one's eye, or a little cinder grit, and there it sticks; and there is no question of leading any forlorn hope, after all, and never will be; all *that* was in the imagination only: it is always gnats and cinder grits, gnats and cinder grits.

By the evening I had ignominiously broken down, and was plunged in the depths of an exasperated pessimism too deep even for tears, and would have believed myself the meanest and most miserable of mankind, but that everybody else, without exception, was even meaner and miserabler than myself.

They could still eat and drink and be merry. I could not, and did not even want to.

And so on, day after day, week after week, for months and years....

Thus I grew weary in time of my palling individuality, ever the same through all these uncontrollable variations of mood.

Oh that alternate ebb and flow of the spirits! It is a disease, and, what is most distressing, it is no real change; it is more sickeningly monotonous than absolute stagnation itself. And from that dreary seesaw I could never escape, except through the gates of dreamless sleep, the death in life; for even in our dreams we are still ourselves. There was no rest!

I loathed the very sight of myself in the shop windows as I went by; and yet I always looked for it there, in the forlorn hope of at least finding some alteration, even for the worse. I passionately longed to be somebody else; and yet I had never met anybody else I could have borne to be for a moment.

And then the loneliness of us!

Each separate unit of our helpless race is inexorably bounded by the inner surface of his own mental periphery, a jointless armour in which there is no weak place, never a fault, never a single gap of egress for ourselves, of ingress for the nearest and dearest of our fellow-units. At only five points can we just touch each other, and all that is—and that only by the function of our poor senses—from the outside. In vain we rack them that we may get a little closer to the best beloved and most implicitly trusted; ever in vain, from the cradle to the grave.

Why should so fantastic a thought have persecuted me so cruelly? I knew nobody with whom I should have felt such a transfusion of soul even tolerable for a second. I cannot tell! But it was like a gadfly which drove me to fatigue my body that I should have by day the stolid peace of mind that comes of healthy physical exhaustion; that I should sleep at night the dreamless sleep—the death in life.

“Of such materials wretched men are made!” Especially wretched young men; and the wretcheder one is, the more one smokes; and the more one smokes, the wretcheder one gets—a vicious circle!

Such was my case. I grew to long for the hour of my release (as I expressed it pathetically to myself), and caressed the idea of suicide. I even composed for myself a little rhymed epitaph in French which I thought very neat—

Je n'étais point. Je fus.
Je ne suis plus.

Oh to perish in some noble cause—to die saving another's life, even another's worthless life, to which he clung!

I remember formulating this wish, in all sincerity, one moonlit night as I walked up Frith Street, Soho. I came upon a little group of excited people gathered together at the foot of a house built over a shop. From a broken window-pane on the second floor an ominous cloud of smoke rose like a column into the windless sky. An ordinary ladder was placed against the house, which, they said, was densely inhabited; but no fire-engine or fire-escape had arrived

as yet, and it appeared useless to try and rouse the inmates by kicking and beating at the door any longer.

A brave man was wanted—a very brave man, who would climb the ladder, and make his way into the house through the broken window. Here was a forlorn hope to lead at last!

Such a man was found. To my lasting shame and contrition, it was not I.

He was short and thick and middle-aged, and had a very jolly red face and immense whiskers—quite a common sort of man, who seemed by no means tired of life.

His heroism was wasted, as it happened; for the house was an empty one, as we all heard, to our immense relief, before he had managed to force a passage into the burning room. His whiskers were not even singed!

Nevertheless I slunk home, and gave up all thoughts of self-destruction—even in a noble cause; and there, in penance, I somewhat hastily committed to flame the plodding labour of many mid-nights—an elaborate copy in pen and ink, line for line, of Retel's immortal wood-engraving "Der Tod als Freund," that Mrs. Lintot had been kind enough to lend me—and under which I had written, in beautiful black Gothic letters and red capitals (and without the slightest sense of either humour or irreverence), the following poem, which had cost me infinite pains:—

I

E, i, fi—n, i, ni!
 Bon Dieu Père, j'ai fini....
 Vous qui m'avez tant puni,
 Dans ma triste vie,
 Pour tant d'horribles forfaits
 Que je ne commis jamais,
 Laissez-moi jouir en paix
 De mon agonie!

II

Les faveurs que je Vous dois,
 Je les compte sur mes doigts:
 Tout infirme que je sois,
 Ça se fait bien vite!
 Prenez patience. et comptez
 Tous mes maux—puis comptez
 Toutes Vos sévérités—
 Vous me tiendrez quitte!

III

Né pour souffrir, et souffrant—
 Bas, honni, bête, ignorant,
 Vieux, laid, chétif—et mourant
 Dans mon trou sans plainte,
 Je suis aussi sans désir
 Autre que d'en bien finir—
 Sans regret, sans repentir—
 Sans espoir ni crainte!

IV

Père inflexible et jaloux,
Votre Fils est mort pour nous!
Aussi, je reste envers Vous
Si bien sans rancune,
Que je voudrais, sans façon,
Faire, au seuil de ma prison,
Quelque petite oraison....
Je n'en sais pas une!

V

J'entends sonner l'Angélus
Qui rassemble Vos Elus:
Pour moi, du bercaïl exclus,
C'est la mort qui sonne!
Prier ne profite rien....
Pardonner est le seul bien:
C'est le Vôtre, et c'est le mien:
Moi, je Vous pardonne!

VI

Soyez d'un égard pareil!
S'il est quelque vrai sommeil
Sans ni rêve, ni réveil,
Ouvrez-m'en la porte—
Faites que l'immense Oubli
Couvre, sous un dernier pli,
Dans mon corps enséveli,
Ma conscience morte!

Oh me duffer! What a hopeless failure was I in all things, little
and big!

PART THIRD

I had no friends but the Lintots and their friends—"Les amis de nos amis sont nos amis!"

My cousin Alfred had gone into the army, like his father before him. My cousin Charlie had gone into the Church, and we had drifted completely apart. My grandmother was dead. My Aunt Plunket, a great invalid, lived in Florence. Her daughter, Madge, was in India, happily married to a young soldier, who is now a most distinguished general.

The Lintots held their heads high as representatives of a liberal profession, and an old Pentonville family! People were generally exclusive in those days—an exclusiveness that was chiefly kept up by the ladies. There were charmed circles even in Pentonville.

Among the most exclusive were the Lintots. Let us hope, in common justice, that those they excluded were at least able to exclude others!

I have eaten their bread and salt, and it would ill become me to deny that their circle was charming as well as charmed. But I had no gift for making friends, although I was often attracted by people the very opposite of myself; especially by little, clever, quick, but not too familiar men; but even if they were disposed to make advances, a miserable shyness and stiffness of manner on my part, that I could not help, would raise a barrier of ice between us.

They were most hospitable people, these good Lintots, and had many friends, and gave many parties, which my miserable shyness prevented me from enjoying to the full. They were both too stiff and too free.

In the drawing-room Mrs. Lintot and one or two other ladies, severely dressed, would play the severest music in a manner that did not mitigate its severity. They were merciless! It was nearly always Bach, or Hummel, or Scarlatti, each of whom, they would say, could write both like an artist and a gentleman—a very rare but indispensable combination, it seemed.

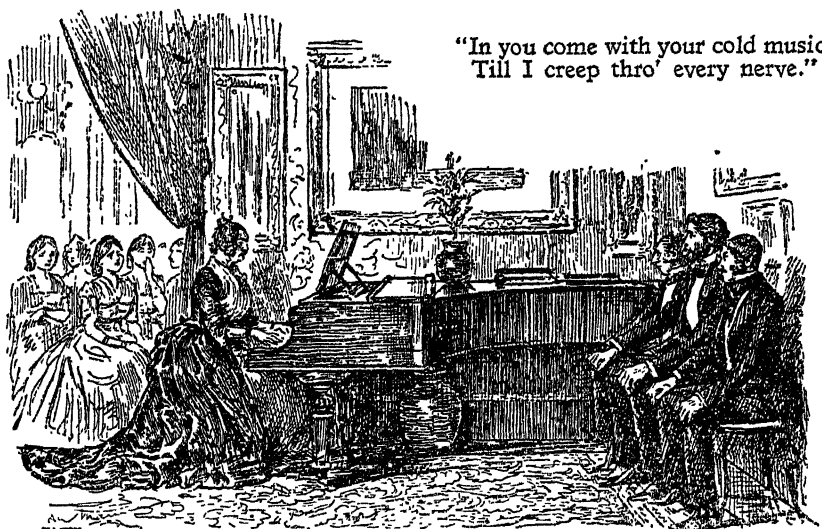
Other ladies, young and middle-aged, and a few dumb-struck youths like myself, would be suffered to listen, but never to retaliate—never to play or sing back again.

If one ventured to ask for a song without words by Mendelssohn—or a song with words, even by Schubert, even with German words—one was rebuked and made to blush for the crime of musical frivolity.

Meanwhile, in Lintot's office (built by himself in the back garden), grave men and true, pending the supper hour, would smoke and sip spirits-and-water, and talk shop; formally at first, and with much politeness. But gradually, feeling their way, as it were,

they would relax into social unbuttonment, and drop the "Mister" before each other's names (to be resumed next morning), and indulge in lively professional chaff, which would soon become personal and free and boisterous—a good-humoured kind of warfare in which I did not shine, for lack of quickness and repartee. For instance, they would ask one whether one would rather be a bigger fool than one looked, or look a bigger fool than one was; and whichever way one answered the question, the retort would be that "that was impossible!" amid roars of laughter from all but one.

So that I would take a middle course, and spend most of the evening on the stairs and in the hall, and study (with an absorbing



LA BELLA CAPRICCIOSA, BY HUMMEL.

interest much too well feigned to look natural) the photographs of famous cathedrals and public buildings till supper came; when, by assiduously attending on the ladies, I would cause my miserable existence to be remembered, and forgiven; and soon forgotten again, I fear.

I hope I shall not be considered an overweening coxcomb for saying that, on the whole, I found more favour with the ladies than with the gentlemen; especially at supper-time.

After supper there would be a change—for the better, some thought. Lintot, emboldened by good cheer and good fellowship, would become unduly, immensely, uproariously funny, in spite of his wife. He had a genuine gift of buffoonery. His friends would whisper to each other that Lintot was "on," and encourage him. Bach and Hummel and Scarlatti were put on the shelf, and the young people would have a good time. There were comic songs

and negro melodies, with a chorus all round. Lintot would sing "Vilikins and his Dinah," in the manner of Mr. Robson, so well that even Mrs. Lintot's stern mask would relax into indulgent smiles. It was irresistible. And when the party broke up, we could all (thank to our host) honestly thank our hostess "for a very pleasant evening," and cheerfully, yet almost regretfully, wish her good-night.

It is good to laugh sometimes—wisely, if one can; if not, *quocumque modo*! There are seasons when even "the crackling of thorns under a pot" has its uses. It seems to warm the pot—all the pots—and all the emptiness thereof, if they be empty.

* * * * *

Once, indeed, I actually made a friend, but he did not last me very long.

It happened thus: Mrs. Lintot gave a grander party than usual. One of the invited was Mr. Moses Lyon, the great picture-dealer—a client of Lintot's; and he brought with him young Raphael Merridew, the already famous painter, the most attractive youth I had ever seen. Small and slight, but beautifully made, and dressed in the extreme of fashion, with a handsome face, bright and polite manners, and an irresistible voice, he became his laurels well; he would have been sufficiently dazzling without them. Never had those hospitable doors in Middleton Square been opened to so brilliant a guest.

I was introduced to him, and he discovered that the bridge of my nose was just suited for the face of the sun-god in his picture of "The Sun-god and the Dawn-maiden," and begged I would favour him with a sitting or two.

Proud indeed was I to accede to such a request, and I gave him many sittings. I used to rise at dawn to sit, before my work at Lintot's began; and to sit again as soon as I could be spared.

It seems I not only had the nose and brow of a sun-god (who is not supposed to be a very intellectual person), but also his arms and his torso; and sat for these, too. I have been vain of myself ever since.

During these sittings, which he made delightful, I grew to love him as David loved Jonathan.

We settled that we would go to the Derby together in a hansom. I engaged the smartest hansom in London, days beforehand. On the great Wednesday morning I was punctual with it at his door in Charlotte Street. There was another hansom there already—a smarter hansom still than mine, for it was a private one—and he came down and told me he had altered his mind, and was going with Lyon, who had asked him the evening before.

"One of the first picture-dealers in London, my dear fellow. Hang it all, you know, I couldn't refuse—awfully sorry!"

So I drove to the Derby in solitary splendour; but the bright

weather, the humours of the road, all the gay scenes were thrown away upon me, such was the bitterness of my heart.

In the early afternoon I saw Merridew lunching on the top of a drag, amongst some men of smart and aristocratic appearance. He seemed to be the life of the party, and gave me a good-humoured nod as I passed. I soon found Lyon sitting disconsolate in his hansom, scowling and solitary; he invited me to lunch with him, and disembosomed himself of a load of bitterness as intense as mine (which I kept to myself). The shrewd Hebrew tradesman was sunk in the warm-hearted, injured friend. Merridew had left Lyon for the Earl of Chiselhurst, just as he had left me for Lyon.

That was a dull Derby for us both!

A few days later I met Merridew, radiant as ever. All he said was—

"Awful shame of me to drop old Lyon for Chiselhurst, eh! But an earl, my dear fellow! Hang it all, you know! Poor old Mo' had to get back in his hansom all by himself; but he's bought the 'Sun-god' all the same."

Merridew soon dropped me altogether, to my great sorrow, for I forgave him his Derby desertion as quickly as Lyon did, and would have forgiven him anything. He was one of those for whom allowances are always being made, and with a good grace.

He died before he was thirty, poor boy; but his fame will never die. The "Sun-god" (even with the bridge of that nose which had been so wofully put out of joint) is enough by itself to place him among the immortals. Lyon sold it to Lord Chiselhurst for three thousand pounds—it had cost him five hundred. It is now in the National Gallery.

Poetical justice was satisfied!

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Nor was I more fortunate in love than in friendship.

All the exclusiveness in the world cannot exclude good and beautiful maidens, and these were not lacking, even in Pentonville.

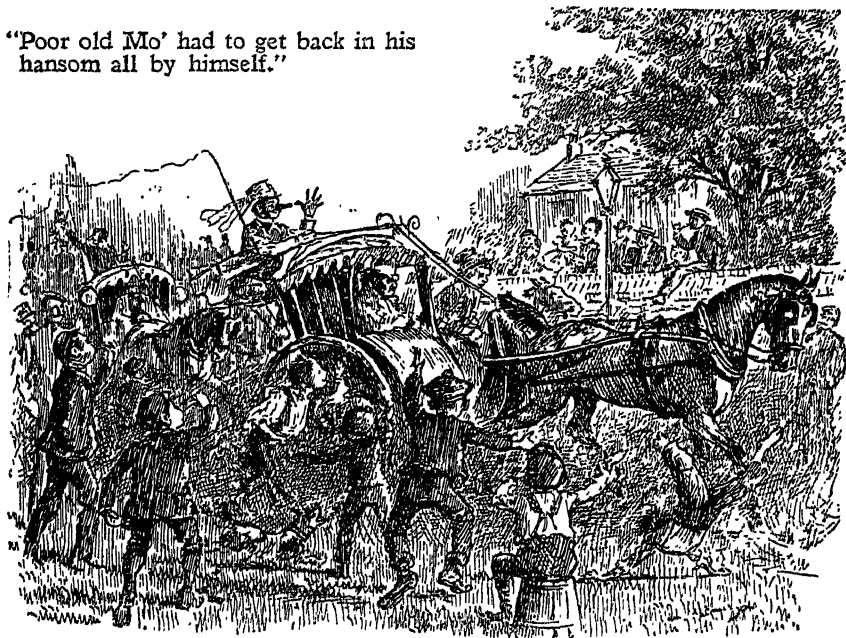
There is always one maiden much more beautiful and good than all the others—like Esmeralda among the ladies of the Hôtel de Gondaurier. There was such a maiden in Pentonville, or rather Clerkenwell, close by. But her station was so humble (like Esmeralda's) that even the least exclusive would have drawn the line at *her*! She was one of a large family, and they sold tripe and pigs' feet, and food for cats and dogs, in a very small shop opposite the western wall of the Middlesex House of Detention. She was the eldest, and the busy responsible one at this poor counter. She was one of Nature's ladies, one of Nature's goddesses—a queen! Of that I felt sure every time I passed her shop and shyly met her kind, frank, uncoquettish gaze. A time was approaching when I should have to overcome my shyness, and tell her that she of all women was the woman for me, and that it was indispensable, ab-

solutely indispensable, that we two should be made one—immediately! at once! for ever!

But before I could bring myself to this she married somebody else, and we had never exchanged a single word!

If she is alive now she is an old woman—a good and beautiful old woman, I feel sure, wherever she is, and whatever her rank in life. If she should read this book, which is not very likely, may she accept this small tribute from an unknown admirer; for whom,

"Poor old Mo' had to get back in his hansom all by himself."



A BULL DERBY FOR US BOTH.

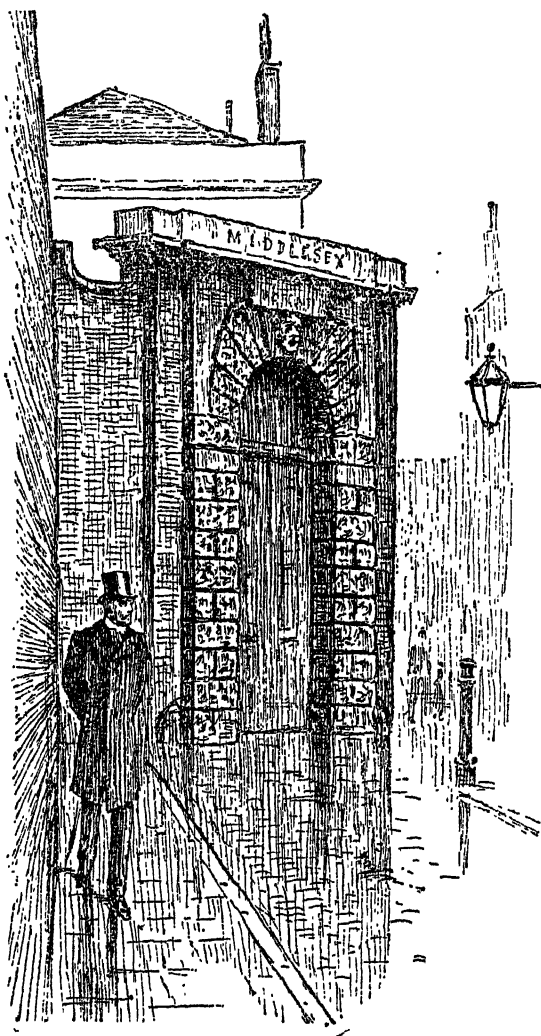
so many years ago, she beautified and made poetical the hideous street that still bounds the Middlesex House of Detention on its western side; and may she try to think not the less of it because since then its writer has been on the wrong side of that long, blank wall, of that dreary portal where the agonised stone face looks down on the desolate slum—

"Per me si va tra la perduta gente....!"

After this disappointment I got myself a big dog (like Byron, Bismarck, and Wagner), but not in the spirit of emulation. Indeed, I had never heard of either Bismarck or Wagner in those days, or their dogs, and I had lost my passion for Byron and any wish to emulate him in any way; it was simply for the want of something

to be fond of, and that would be sure to love me back again.

He was not a big dog when I bought him, but just a little ball of orange-tawny fluff that I could carry with one arm. He cost me all the money I had saved up for a holiday trip to Passy. I had



"PER ME SI VA TRA LA PERDUTA GENTE!"

seen his father, a champion St. Bernard, at a dog-show, and felt that life would be well worth living with such a companion; but *his* price was five hundred guineas. When I saw the irresistible son, just six weeks old, and heard that he was only one-fiftieth

part of his sire's value. I felt that Passy must wait, and became his possessor.

I gave him of the best that money could buy—real milk at five-pence a quart, three quarts a day. I combed his fluff every morning, and washed him three times a week, and killed all his fleas one by one—a labour of love. I weighed him every Saturday, and found he increased at the rate of from six to nine pounds weekly; and his power of affection increased as the square of his weight. I christened him Porthos, because he was so big and fat and jolly; but in his noble puppy face and his beautiful pathetic eyes I already



PORTHOS AND HIS ATTENDANT SQUIRE.

foresaw for his middle age that distinguished and melancholy grandeur which characterised the sublime Athos, Comte de la Fère!

He was a joy. It was good to go to sleep at night and know he would be there in the morning. Whenever we took our walks abroad, everybody turned round to look at him and admire, and to ask if he was good-tempered, and what his particular breed was, and what I fed him on. He became a monster in size, a beautiful, playful, gracefully galumphing, and most affectionate monster, and I, his happy Frankenstein, congratulated myself on the possession of a treasure that would last twelve years at least, or even fourteen, with the care I meant to take of him. But he died of distemper when he was eleven months old.

I do not know if little dogs cause as large griefs when they die as

big ones. But I settled there should be no more dogs—big or little—for me.

After this I took to writing verses and sending them to magazines, where they never appeared. They were generally about my being reminded, by a tune, of things that had happened a long time ago: my poetic, like my artistic vein, was limited.

Here are the last I made, thirty years back. My only excuse for giving them is that they are so *singularly prophetic*!

The reminding tune (an old French chime which my father used to sing) is very simple and touching; and the old French words run thus—

“Orléans, Beaugency!
Notre Dame de Cléry!
Vendôme! Vendôme!
Quel chagrin, quel ennui
De compter toute la nuit
Les heures—les heures!”

That is all. They are supposed to be sung by a mediaeval prisoner who cannot sleep; and who, to beguile the tediousness of his insomnia, sets any words that come into his head to the tune of the chime which marks the hours from a neighbouring belfry. I tried to fancy that his name was Pasquier de la Marière, and that he was my ancestor.

THE CHIME

There is an old French air,
A little song of loneliness and grief—
Simple as nature, sweet beyond compare—
And sad—past all belief!

Nameless is he that wrote
The melody—but this much I opine:
Whoever made the words was some remote
French ancestor of mine.

I know the dungeon deep
Where long he lay—and why he lay therein;
And all his anguish, that he could not sleep
For conscience of a sin.

I see his cold hard bed;
I hear the chime that jingled in his ears
As he pressed nightly, with that wakeful head,
A pillow wet with tears.

O restless little chime!
It never changed—but rang its roundelay
For each dark hour of that unhappy time
That sighed itself away.

And ever, more and more,
 Its burden grew of his lost self a part—
 And mingled with his memories, and wore
 Its way into his heart.

And there it wove the name
 Of many a town he loved, for one dear sake,
 Into its web of music; thus he came
 His little song to make.

Of all that ever heard
 And loved it for its sweetness, none but I
 Divined the clue that, as a hidden word,
 The notes doth underlie.

That wail from lips long dead
 Has found its echo in this breast alone!
 Only to me, by blood-remembrance led,
 Is that wild story known!

And though 'tis mine, by right
 Of treasure-trove, to rifle and lay bare—
 A heritage of sorrow and delight
 The world would gladly share—

Yet must I not unfold
 For evermore, nor whisper late or soon,
 The secret that a few slight bars thus hold
 Imprisoned in a tune.

For when that little song
 Goes ringing in my head, I know that he,
 My luckless lone forefather, dust so long,
 Relives his life in me!

I sent them to — *'s Magazine*, with the six French lines on which they were founded at the top. — *'s Magazine* published only the six French lines — the only lines in my handwriting that ever got into print. And they date from the fifteenth century!

Thus was my little song lost to the world, and for a time to me. But long, long afterward I found it again, where Mr. Longfellow once found a song of *his*: "in the heart of a friend"—surely the sweetest bourne that can ever be for any song!

Little did I foresee that a day was not far off when real blood-remembrance would carry me—but that is to come.

Poetry, friendship, and love having failed, I sought for consolation in art, and frequented the National Gallery, Malborough House (where the Vernon collection was), the British Museum, the Royal Academy, and other exhibitions.

I prostrated myself before Titian, Rembrandt, Velasquez, Veronese, Da Vinci, Botticelli, Signorelli—the older the better; and tried my best to honestly feel the greatness I knew and know to be there; but for want of proper training I was unable to reach

those heights, and, like most outsiders, admired them for the wrong things, for the very beauties they lack—such transcendent, ineffable beauties of feature, form, and expression as an outsider always looks for in an old master, and often persuades himself he finds there—and oftener still, *pretends* he does!

I was far more sincerely moved (although I did not dare to say so) by some works of our own time—for instance, by the “Vale of Rest,” the “Autumn Leaves,” “The Huguenot,” of young Mr. Millais—just as I found such poems as *Maud* and *In Memoriam*, by Mr. Alfred Tennyson, infinitely more precious and dear to me than Milton’s *Paradise Lost* and Spenser’s *Faerie Queene*.

Indeed, I was hopelessly modern in those days—quite an everyday young man; the names I held in the warmest and deepest regard were those of then living men and women. Darwin, Browning, and George Eliot did not, it is true, exist for me as yet, but Tennyson, Thackeray, Dickens, Millais, John Leech, George Sand, Balzac, the old Dumas, Victor Hugo, and Alfred de Musset!

I have never beheld them in the flesh; but, like all the world, I know their outer aspect well, and could stand a pretty stiff examination in most they have ever written, drawn, or painted.

Other stars of magnitude have risen since; but of the old galaxy four at least still shine out of the past with their ancient lustre undimmed in my eyes—Thackeray; dear John Leech, who still has power to make me laugh as I like to laugh; and for the two other it is plain that the Queen, the world, and I are of a like mind as to their deserts, for one of them is now an ornament to the British peerage, the other a baronet and a millionaire; only I would have made dukes of them straight off, with precedence over the Archbishop of Canterbury, if they would care to have it so.

It is with a full but humble heart that I thus venture to record my long indebtedness, and pay this poor tribute, still fresh from the days of my unquestioning hero-worship. It will serve, at least, to show my reader (should I ever have one sufficiently interested to care) in what mental latitudes and longitudes I dwelt, who was destined to such singular experience—kind of reference, so to speak—that he may be able to place me at a glance, according to the estimation in which he holds these famous and perhaps deathless names.

It will be admitted, at least, that my tastes were normal, and shared by a large majority—the tastes of an everyday young man at that particular period of the nineteenth century—one much given to athletics and cold tubs, and light reading and cheap tobacco and endowed with the usual discontent; the last person for whom of from whom or by whom to expect anything out of the common.

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But the splendour of the Elgin Marbles! I understood that at once—perhaps because there is not so much to understand. Mere

physically beautiful people appeal to us all, whether they be in flesh or marble.

By some strange intuition, or natural instinct, I *knew* that people ought to be built like that, before I had ever seen a single statue in that wondrous room. I had divined them—so completely did they realise an aesthetic ideal I had always felt.

I had often, as I walked the London streets, peopled an imaginary world of my own with a few hundreds of such beings, made flesh and blood, and pictured them as a kind of beneficent aristocracy seven feet high, with minds and manners to match their physique, and set above the rest of the world for its good; for I found it necessary (so that my dream should have a point) to provide them with a foil in the shape of millions of such people as we meet every day. I was egotistic and self-seeking enough, it is true, to enrol myself among the former, and had chosen for my particular use and wear just such a frame as that of the Theseus, with, of course, the nose and hands and feet (of which time has bereft him) restored, and all mutilations made good.

And for my mistress and companion I had duly selected no less a person than the Venus of Milo (no longer armless), of which Lintot possessed a plaster cast, and whose beauties I had foreseen before I ever beheld them with the bodily eye.

"Monsieur n'est pas dégoûté!" as Ibbetson would have remarked.

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But most of all did I pant for the music which is divine.

Alas, that concerts and operas and oratorios should not be as free to the impecunious as the National Gallery and the British Museum!—a privilege which is not abused!

Impecunious as I was, I sometimes had pence enough to satisfy this craving, and discovered in time such realms of joy as I had never dreamed of; such monarchs as Mozart, Handel, and Beethoven, and others of whom my father knew apparently so little; and yet they were more potent enchanters than Grétry, Hérold, and Boieldieu, whose music he sang so well.

I discovered, moreover, that they could do more than charm—they could drive my weary self out of my weary soul, and for a space fill that weary soul with courage, resignation, and hope. No Titian, no Shakespeare, no Phidias could ever accomplish that—not even Mr. William Makepeace Thackeray or Mr. Alfred Tennyson.

My sweetest recollections of this period of my life (indeed, the only sweet recollections) are of the music I heard, and the places where I heard it; it was an enchantment! With what vividness I can recall it all! The eager anticipation for days; the careful selection, beforehand, from such an *embarras de richesses* as was duly advertised; then the long waiting in the street, at the doors reserved for those whose portion is to be the gallery. The hard-won

seat aloft is reached at last, after a selfish but good-humoured struggle up the long stone staircase (one is sorry for the weak, but a famished ear has no conscience). The gay and splendid house is crammed; the huge chandelier is a golden blaze; the delight

"Goddess and maiden and queen, be near me now and befriend."



MONSIEUR N'EST PAS DÉGOÛTÉ.

of expectation is in the air, and also the scent of gas, and peppermint, and orange-peel; and music-loving humanity, whom I have discovered to be of sweeter fragrance than the common herd.

The orchestra fills, one by one; instruments tune up—a familiar cacophony, sweet with seductive promise. The conductor takes his seat—applause—a hush—three taps—the baton waves once,

twice, thrice—the eternal fountain of magic is let loose, and at the very first jet

“The cares that infest the day
Shall fold their tents, like the Arabs,
And as silently steal away.”

Then lo! the curtain rises, and straightway we are in Seville—Seville, after Pentonville! Count Almaviva, lordly, gallant, and gay beneath his disguise, twangs his guitar, and what sounds issue from it! For every instrument that was ever invented is in that guitar—the whole orchestra!

“*Ecco ridente il cielo . . .*,” so sings he (with the most beautiful male voice of his time) under Rosina’s balcony; and soon Rosina’s voice (the most beautiful female voice of hers) is heard behind her curtains—so girlish, so innocent, so young and light-hearted, that the eyes fill with involuntary tears.

Thus encouraged, he warbles that his name is Lindoro, that he would fain espouse her; that he is not rich in the goods of this world, but gifted with an inordinate, inexhaustible capacity for love (just like Peter Ibbetson); and vows that he will always warble to her, in this wise, from dawn till when daylight sinks behind the mountain. But what matter the words?

“Go on, my love, go on, *like this!*” warbles back Rosina—and no wonder—till the dull, despondent, commonplace heart of Peter Ibbetson has room for nothing else but sunny hope and love and joy! And yet it is all mere sound—impossible, unnatural, unreal nonsense!

Or else, in a square building, decent and well-lighted enough, but not otherwise remarkable—the very chapel of music—four business-like gentlemen, in modern attire and spectacles, take their places on an unpretentious platform amid refined applause; and soon the still air vibrates to the trembling of sixteen strings—only that and nothing more!

But in that is all Beethoven or Schubert or Schumann has got to say to us for the moment, and what a say it is! And with what consummate precision and perfection it is said—with what a mathematical certainty; and yet with what suavity, dignity, grace, and distinction!

They are the four greatest players in the world, perhaps; but they forget themselves, and we forget them (as it is their wish we should), in the master whose work they interpret so reverently, that we may yearn with his mighty desire and thrill with his rapture and triumph, or ache with his heavenly pain and submit with his divine resignation.

Not all the words in all the tongues that ever were—dovetail them, rhyme them, alliterate them, torture them as you will—can ever pierce to the uttermost depths of the soul of man, and let in a glimpse of the Infinite, as do the inarticulate tremblings of those sixteen strings.

Ah, songs without words are the best!

Then a gipsy-like little individual, wiry and unkempt, who looks as if he had spent his life listening to the voices of the night in heaven knows what Lithuanian forests, with wolves and wild-boars for his familiars, and the wind in the trees for his teacher, seats himself at the great brass-bound oaken Broadwood pianoforte. And under his phenomenal fingers, a haunting, tender world-sorrow, full of questionings—a dark mystery of moonless, starlit nature—exhales itself in nocturnes, in impromptus, in preludes—in mere waltzes and mazourkas even! But waltzes and mazourkas such as the most frivolous would never dream of dancing to. A capricious, charming sorrow—not too deep for tears, if one be at all inclined to shed them—so delicate, so fresh, and yet so distinguished, so ethereally civilised and wordly and well-bred, that it has crystallised itself into a drawing-room ecstasy, to last for ever. It seems as though what was death (or rather euthanasia) to him who felt it, is play for us—surely an immortal sorrow whose recital will never, never pall—the sorrow of Chopin.

Though why Chopin should have been so sorry we cannot even guess: for mere sorrow's sake, perhaps; the very luxury of woe—the real sorrow which has no real cause (like mine in those days); and that is the best and cheapest kind of sorrow to make music of, after all!

And this great little gipsy pianist, who plays his Chopin so well, evidently he has not spent his life in Lithuanian forests, but hard at the keyboard, night and day; and he has had a better master than the wind in the trees—namely, Chopin himself (for it is printed in the programme). It was his father and mother before him, and theirs, who heard the voices of the night; but he remembers it all, and puts it all into his master's music, and makes us remember it too.

Or else behold the chorus, rising tier upon tier, and culminating in the giant organ. But their thunder is just hushed.

Some Liliputian figure, male or female, as the case may be, rises on its little legs amid the great Liliputian throng, and through the sacred stillness there peals forth a perfect voice (by no means Liliputian). It bids us "Rest in the Lord," or else it tells us that "He was despised and rejected of men"; but, again, what matter the words? They are almost a hindrance, beautiful though they be.

The hardened soul melts at the tones of the singer, at the unspeakable pathos of the sounds that cannot lie; one almost believes—one believes at least in the belief of others. At last one understands, and is purged of intolerance and cynical contempt, and would kneel with the rest, in sheer human sympathy!

O wretched outsider that one is (if it all be true)—one whose heart, so hopelessly impervious to the written word, so helplessly callous to the spoken message, can be reached only by the organised

vibrations of a trained larynx, a metal pipe, a reed, a fiddlestring—by invisible, impalpable, incomprehensible little air waves in mathematical combination, that beat against a tiny drum at the back of one's ear. And these mathematical combinations and the laws that govern them have existed for ever, before Moses, before Pan, long before either a larynx or a tympanum had been evolved. They are absolute!

O mystery of mysteries!

Euterpe, Muse of Muses, what a personage hast thou become since first thou satest for thy likeness (with that ridiculous lyre in thy untaught hands) to some Greek who could carve so much better than thou couldst play!

Four strings; but not the fingerable strings of Stradivarius. Nay, I beg thy pardon—five; for thy scale was pentatonic, I believe. Orpheus himself had no better, it is true. It was with just such an instrument that he all but charmed his Eurydice out of Hades. But, alas, she went back; on second thoughts she liked Hades best!

Couldst thou fire and madden and wring the heart, and then melt and console and charm it into the peace that passeth all understanding, with those poor five rudimentary notes, and naught between?

Couldst thou out of those five sounds of fixed unalterable pitch, make, not a sixth sound, but a star?

What were they, those five sounds? "Do, re, mi, fa, sol?" What must thy songs without words have been, it thou didst ever make any?

Thou wast in very deed a bread-and-butter miss in those days, Euterpe, for all that thy eight twin sisters were already grown up, and now thou toppest them all by half a head, at least. "Tu leur mangerais des petits pâtés sur la tête—comme Madame Seraskier!"

And oh, how thou beatest them all for beauty! In my estimation at least—like—like Madame Seraskier again!

And hast thou done growing at last?

Nay, indeed; thou art not even yet a bread-and-butter miss—thou art but a sweet baby, one year old, and seven feet high, tottering midway between some blessed heaven thou hast only just left and the dull home of us poor mortals.

The sweet one-year-old baby of our kin puts its hands upon our knees and looks up into our eyes with eyes full of unutterable meaning. It has so much to say! It can only say "ga-ga" and "ba-ba"; but with oh! how searching a voice, how touching a look—that is, if one is fond of babies! We are moved to the very core; we want to understand, for it concerns us all; we were once like that ourselves—the individual and the race—but for the life of us we cannot remember.

And what canst thou say to us yet, Euterpe, but thy "ga-ga" and thy "ba-ba," the inarticulate sweetness whereof we feel and

cannot comprehend? But how beautiful it is—and what a look thou hast, and what a voice—that is, if one is fond of music!

“Je suis las des mots—je suis las d’entendre
Ce qui peut mentir;
J’aime mieux les sons, qu’au lieu de comprendre
Je n’ai qu’à sentir.”

Next day I would buy or beg or borrow the music that had filled me with such emotion and delight, and take it home to my little square piano, and try to finger it all out for myself. But I had begun too late in life.

To sit, longing and helpless, before an instrument one cannot play, with a lovely score one cannot read! Even Tantalus was spared such an ordeal as that.

It seemed hard that my dear father and mother, so accomplished in music themselves, should not even have taught me the musical notes, at an age when it was so easy to learn them; and thus have made me free of that wonder-world of sound in which I took such an extraordinary delight, and might have achieved distinction—perhaps.

But no, my father had dedicated me to the Goddess of Science from before my very birth; that I might some day be better equipped than he for the pursuit, capture, and utilisation of nature’s sterner secrets. There must be no dallying with light Muses. Alas! I have fallen between two stools!

And thus, Euterpe absent, her enchantment would pass away; her handwriting was before me, but I had not learned how to decipher it, and my weary self would creep back into its old prison—my soul.

Self-sickness—*selbstschmerz, le mal de soi!* What a disease! It is not to be found in any dictionary, medical or otherwise.

I ought to have been whipped for it, I know; but nobody was big enough, or kind enough, to whip me!

At length there came a day when that weary, weak, and most ridiculous self of mine was driven out—and exorcised for good—by a still more potent enchanter than even Handel or Beethoven or Schubert!

There was a certain Lord Cray, for whom Lintot had built some labourers’ cottages in Hertfordshire, and I sometimes went there to superintend the workmen. When the cottages were finished, Lord Cray and his wife (a very charming, middle-aged lady) came to see them, and were much pleased with all that had been done, and also seemed to be much interested in *me*, of all people in the world! and a few days later I received a card of invitation to their house in town for a concert,

At first I felt much too shy to go; but Mr. Lintot insisted that it was my duty to do so, as it might lead to business; so that when the night came, I screwed up my courage to the sticking-place, and went.

That evening was all enchantment, or would have been but for the somewhat painful feeling that I was such an outsider.

But I was always well content to be the least observed of all observers, and felt happy in the security that here I should at least be left alone; that no perfect stranger would attempt to put me at my ease by making me the butt of his friendly and familiar banter; that no gartered duke or belted earl (I have no doubt they were as plentiful there as blackberries, though they did not wear their insignia) would pat me on the back and ask me if I would sooner look a bigger fool than I was, or be a bigger fool than I looked. (I have not found a repartee for that insidious question yet; that is why it rankles so.)

I had always heard that the English were a stiff people. There seemed to be no stiffness at Lady Cray's; nor was there any facetiousness; it put one at one's ease merely to look at them. They were mostly big, and strong, and healthy, and quiet, and good-humoured; with soft and pleasantly modulated voices. The large, well-lighted rooms were neither hot nor cold; there were beautiful pictures on the walls, and an exquisite scent of flowers came from an immense conservatory. I had never been to such a gathering before; all was new and a surprise, and very much to my taste, I confess. It was my first glimpse of "Society"; and last—but one!

There were crowds of people—but no crowd; everybody seemed to know everybody else quite intimately, and to resume conversations begun an hour ago somewhere else.

Presently these conversations were hushed, and Grisi and Mario sang! It was as much as I could do to restrain my enthusiasm and delight. I could have shouted out loud. I could almost have sung myself!

In the midst of the applause that followed that heavenly duet, a lady and gentleman came into the room, and at the sight of that lady a new interest came into my life; and all the old half-forgotten sensations of mute pain and rapture that the beauty of Madame Seraskier used to make me feel as a child were revived once more; but with a depth and intensity, in comparison, that were as a strong man's barytone to a small boy's treble.

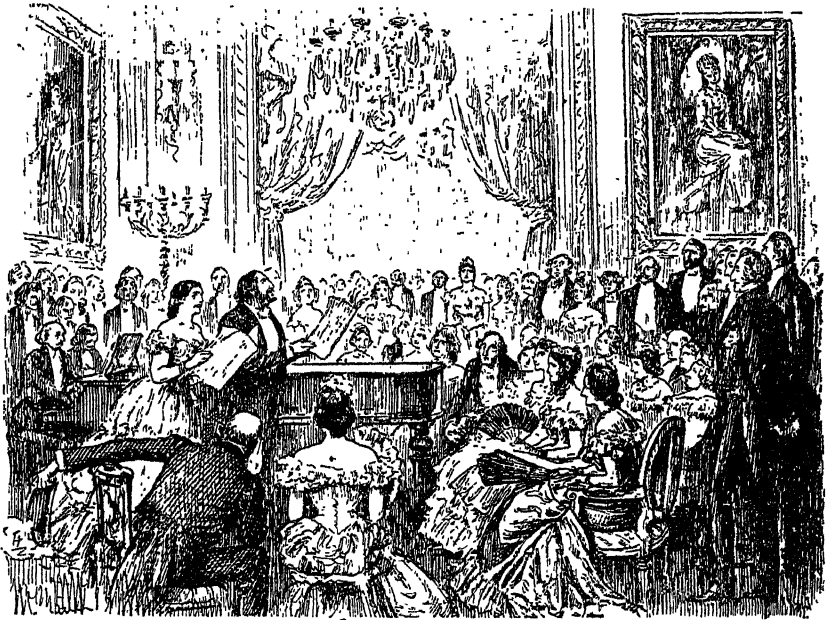
It was the quick, sharp, cruel blow, the *coup de poignard*, that beauty of the most obvious, yet subtle, consummate, and highly organised order can deal to a thoroughly prepared victim.

And what a thoroughly prepared victim was I! A poor, shy, over-susceptible, virginal savage—Uncas, the son of Chingachgook, astray for the first time in a fashionable London drawing-room.

A chaste mediaeval knight, born out of his due time, ascetic

both from reverence and disgust, to whom woman in the abstract was the one religion; in the concrete, the cause of fifty disenchantments a day!

A lusty, love-famished, warm-blooded pagan, stranded in the middle of the nineteenth century; in whom some strange inherited instinct had planted a definite, complete, and elaborately finished conception of what the ever-beloved shape of woman should be—from the way the hair should grow on her brow and her temples



PARIGI, O CARA.

and the nape of her neck, down to the very rhythm that should regulate the length and curve and position of every single individual toe! and who had found, to his pride and delight, that his preconceived ideal was as near to that of Phidias as if he had lived in the time of Pericles and Aspasia.

For such was this poor scribe, and such he had been from a child, until this beautiful lady first swam into his ken.

She was so tall that her eyes seemed almost on a level with mine, but she moved with the alert lightness and grace of a small person. Her thick, heavy hair was of a dark coppery brown; her complexion clear and pale, her eyebrows and eyelashes black, her eyes a light bluish-gray. Her nose was short and sharp and rather tilted at the tip, and her red mouth large and very mobile; and here, deviating from my preconceived ideal, she showed me how tame a precon-

ceived ideal can be. Her perfect head was small, and round her long thick throat two slight creases went parallel, to makewhat French sculptors call *le collier de Vénus*; the skin of her neck was like a white camellia, and slender and square-shouldered as she was, she did not show a bone. She was that beautiful type the French define as *la fausse maigre*, which does not mean a "false, thin woman."

She seemed both thoughtful and mirthful at once, and genial as I had never seen any one genial before—a person to confide in, to tell all one's troubles to, without even an introduction! When she laughed, she showed both top and bottom teeth, which were perfect, and her eyes nearly closed, so that they could no longer be seen for the thick lashes that fringed both upper and under eyelids; at which time the expression of her face was so keenly, cruelly sweet that it went through one like a knife. And then the laugh would suddenly cease, her full lips would meet, and her eyes beam out again like two mild gray suns, benevolently humorous and kindly inquisitive, and full of interest in everything and everybody around her. But there—I cannot describe her any more than one can describe a beautiful tune.

Out of those magnificent orbs kindness, kindness, kindness, was shed like a balm; and after a while, by chance, that balm was shed for a few moments on me, to my sweet but terrible confusion. Then I saw that she asked my hostess who I was, and received the answer; on which she shed her balm on me for one moment more, and dismissed me from her thoughts.

Madame Grisi sang again—Desdemona's song from *Otello*—and the beautiful lady thanked the divine singer, whom she seemed to know quite intimately; and I thought her thanks—Italian thanks—even diviner than the song—not that I could quite understand them or even hear them well—I was too far; but she thanked with eyes and hands and shoulders—slight, happy movements—as well as words; surely the sweetest and sincerest words ever spoken.

She was much surrounded and made up to—evidently a person of great importance; and I ventured to ask another shy man standing in my corner who she was, and he answered—

"The Duchess of Towers."

She did not stay long, and when she departed all turned dull and commonplace that has seemed so bright before she came; and seeing that it was not necessary to bid my hostess good-night and thank her for a pleasant evening, as we did in Pentonville, I got myself out of the house and walked back to my lodgings an altered man.

I should probably never meet that lovely young duchess again, and certainly never know her; but her shaft had gone straight and true into my very heart, and I felt how well barbed it was, beyond all possibility of its ever being torn out of that blessed wound; might this never heal; might it bleed on for ever!

She would be an ideal in my lonely life, to live up to in thought and word and deed. An instinct which I felt to be infallible told me she was as good as she was fair—

“Dowered with the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn,
The love of love.”



THE DUCHESS OF TOWERS.

And just as Madame Seraskier's image was fading away, this new star had arisen to guide me by its light, though seen but for a moment; breaking once, through a parted cloud, I knew in which portion of the heavens it dwelt and shone apart, among the fairest constellations; and ever after turned my face that way. Nevermore in my life would I do or say or think a mean thing, or an impure, or an unkind one, if I could help it.

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Next day, as we walked to the Foundling Hospital for divine service, Mrs. Lintot severely deigned—under protest, as it were—to cross-examine me on the adventures of the evening.

I did not mention the Duchess of Towers, nor was I able to describe the different ladies' dresses; but I described everything else in a manner I thought calculated to interest her deeply—the flowers, the splendid pictures and curtains and cabinets, the beautiful music, the many lords and ladies gay.

She disapproved of them all.

"Existence on such an opulent scale was unconducive to any qualities of real sterling value, either moral or intellectual. Give *her*, for one, plain living and high thinking!"

"By the way," she asked, "what kind of supper did they give you? Something extremely *recherché*, I have no doubt. Ortolans, nightingales' tongues, pearls dissolved in wine?"

Candour obliged me to confess there had been no supper, or that if there had I had managed to miss it. I suggested that perhaps everybody had dined late; and all the pearls, I told her, were on the ladies' necks and in their hair; and not feeling hungry, I could not wish them anywhere else; and the nightingales' tongues were in their throats to sing heavenly Italian duets with.

"And they call that hospitality!" exclaimed Lintot, who loved his supper; and then, as he was fond of summing up and laying down the law when once his wife had given him the lead, he did so to the effect that though the great were all very well in their superficial way, and might possess many external charms for each other, and for all who were so deplorably weak as to fall within the sphere of their attraction, there was a gulf between the likes of them and the likes of us, which it would be better not to try and bridge if one wished to preserve one's independence and one's self-respect; unless, of course, it led to business; and this, he feared, it would never do with me.

"They take you up one day and they drop you like a 'ot potato the next; and, moreover, my dear Peter," he concluded, affectionately linking his arm in mine, as was often his way when we walked together (although he was twelve good inches shorter than myself), "inequality of social condition is a bar to any real intimacy. It is something like disparity of physical stature. One can walk arm in arm only with a man of about one's own size."

This summing-up seemed so judicious, so incontrovertible, that feeling quite deplorably weak enough to fall within the sphere of Lady Cray's attraction if I saw much of her, and thereby losing my self-respect, I was deplorably weak enough not to leave a card on her after the happy evening I had spent at her house.

Snob that I was, I dropped her—"like a 'ot potato"—for fear of her dropping me.

Besides which I had on my conscience a guilty, snobby feeling that in merely external charms at least these fine people were more to my taste than the charmed circle of my kind old friends the Lintots, however inferior they might be to these (for all that I knew) in sterling qualities of the heart and head—just as I found the

outer aspect of Park Lane and Piccadilly more attractive than that of Pentonville, though possibly the latter may have been the more wholesome for such as I to live in.

But people who can get Mario and Grisi to come and sing for them (and the Duchess of Towers to come and listen); people whose walls are covered with beautiful pictures; people for whom the smooth and harmonious ordering of all the little external things of social life has become a habit and a profession—such people are not to be dropped without a pang.

So with a pang I went back to my usual round as though nothing had happened; but night and day the face of the Duchess of Towers was ever present to me, like a fixed idea that dominates a life.

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On reading and re-reading these past pages I find that I have been unpardonably egotistic, unconscionably prolix and diffuse; and with such small beer to chronicle!

And yet I feel that if I strike out this, I must also strike out that; which would lead to my striking out all, in sheer discouragement; and I have a tale to tell which is more than worth the telling!

Once having got into the way of it, I suppose, I must have found the temptation to talk about myself irresistible.

It is evidently a habit easy to acquire, even in old age—perhaps especially in old age, for it has never been my habit through life. I would sooner have talked to you about yourself, reader, or about you to somebody else—your friend, or even your enemy; or about them to you.

But, indeed, at present, and until I die, I am without a soul to talk to about anybody or anything worth speaking of, so that most of my talking is done in pen and ink—a one-sided conversation, O patient reader, with yourself. I am the most lonely old man in the world, although perhaps the happiest.

Still, it is not always amusing where I live, cheerfully awaiting my translation to another sphere.

There is the good chaplain, it is true, and the good priest; who talk to me about myself a little too much, methinks; and the doctor who talks to me about the priest and the chaplain, which is better. He does not seem to like them. He is a very witty man.

But, my brother maniacs!

They are lamentably *comme tout le monde*, after all. They are only interesting when the mad fit seizes them. When free from their awful complaint they are for the most part very common mortals: conventional Philistines, dull dogs like myself, and dull dogs do not like each other.

Two of the most sensible (one a forger, the other a kleptomaniac on an important scale) are friends of mine. They are fairly well educated, respectable city men, clean, solemn, stodgy, punctilious, and resigned, but they are both unhappy; not because they are

cursed with the double brand of madness and crime, and have forfeited their freedom in consequence; but because they find there are so few "ladies and gentlemen" in a criminal lunatic asylum, and they have always been used to "the society of ladies and gentlemen." Were it not for this, they would be well content to live here. And each is in the habit of confiding to me that he considers the other a very high-minded, trustworthy fellow, and all that, but not altogether "quite a gentleman." I do not know what they consider me; they probably confide that to each other.

Can anything be less odd, less eccentric or interesting?

Another, when quite sane, speaks English with a French accent and demonstrative French gestures, and laments the lost glories of the old French régime, and affects to forget the simplest English words. He does not know a word of French, however. But when his madness comes on, and he is put into a straitwaistcoat, all his English comes back, and very strong, fluent, idiomatic English it is, of the cockneyest kind with all its "h's" duly transposed.

Another (the most unpleasant and ugliest person here) has chosen me for the confidant of his past amours; he gives me the names and dates and all. The less I listen the more he confides. He makes me sick. What can I do to prevent his believing that I believe him? I am tired of killing people for lying about women. If I call him a liar and a cad, it may wake in him heaven knows what dormant frenzy—for I am quite in the dark as to the nature of his mental infirmity.

Another, a weak but amiable and well-intentioned youth, tries to think that he is passionately fond of music; but he is so exclusive, if you please, that he can only endure Bach and Beethoven, and when he hears Mendelssohn or Chopin, is obliged to leave the room. If I want to please him I whistle "Le Bon Roi Dagobert," and tell him it is the *motif* of one of Bach's fugues; and to get rid of him I whistle it again and tell him it is one of Chopin's *impromptus*. What his madness is I can never be quite sure, for he is very close, but have heard that he is fond of roasting cats alive; and that the mere sight of a cat is enough to rouse his terrible propensity, and drive all wholesome, innocent, harmless, natural affectation out of his head.

There is a painter here who (like others one has met outside) believes himself the one living painter worthy of the name. Indeed, he has forgotten the names of all the others, and can only despise and abuse them in the lump. He triumphantly shows you his own work, which consists of just the kind of crude, half-clever, irresponsible, impressionist daubs you would expect from an amateur who talks in that way; and you wonder why on earth he should be in a lunatic asylum, of all places in the world. And (just as would happen outside, again) some of his fellow-sufferers take him at his own valuation and believe him a great genius; some of them

want to kick him for an impudent impostor (but that he is so small); and the majority do not care.

His mania is arson, poor fellow! and when the terrible wish comes over him to set the place on fire, he forgets his artistic conceit, and his mean, weak, silly face becomes almost grand.

And with the female inmates it is just the same. There is a lady who has spent twenty years of her life here. Her father was a small country doctor, called Snogget; her husband an obscure, hard-working curate; and she is absolutely normal, commonplace, and even vulgar. For her hobby is to discourse of well-born and titled people and county families, with whom (and with no others) it has always been her hope and desire to mix; and is still, though her hair is nearly white, and she is still here. She thinks and talks and cares about nothing else but "smart people," and has conceived a very warm regard for me, on account of Lieutenant-Colonel Ibbetson, of Ibbetson Hall, Hopshire; not because I killed him and was sentenced to be hanged for it, or because he was a greater criminal than I (all of which is interesting enough); but because he was my relative, and that through him I must be distantly connected, she thinks, with the Ibbetsons of Lechmere—whoever they may be, and whom neither she nor I have ever met (indeed, I had never heard of them), but whose family history she knows almost by heart. What can be tamer, duller, more prosaic, more sordidly humdrum, more hopelessly sane, more characteristic of common, underbred, provincial feminine cackle?

And yet this woman, in a fit of conjugal jealousy, murdered her own children; and her father went mad in consequence, and her husband cut his throat.

In fact, during their lucid intervals it would never enter one's mind that they were mad at all, they are so absolutely like the people one meets every day in the world—such narrow-minded idiots, such deadly bores! One might as well be back in Pentonville or Hopshire again, or live in Passionate Brompton (as I am told it is called); or even in Belgravia, for that matter!

For we have a young lord and a middle-aged baronet—a shocking pair, who should not be allowed to live; but for family influence they would be doing their twenty years' penal servitude in jail, instead of living comfortably sequestered here. Like Ouida's high-born heroes, they "stick to their order," and do not mingle with the rest of us. They ignore us so completely that we cannot help looking up to them in spite of their vices—just as we should do outside.

And we, of the middle class, we stick to our order too, and do not mingle with the small shopkeepers—who do not mingle with the labourers, artisans, and mechanics—who (alas for them!) have nobody to look down upon but each other—but they do not; and are the best-bred people in the place.

Such are we! It is only when our madness is upon us that we

cease to be commonplace, and wax tragical and great, or else original and grotesque and humorous, with that true deep humour that compels both our laughter and our tears, and leaves us older, sadder and wiser than it found us.

"Sunt lacrimae rerum, et mentem mortalia tangunt."

(So much, if little more, can I recall of the benign Virgil.)

And now to my small beer again, which will have more of a head to it henceforward.

Thus did I pursue my solitary way, like Bryant's Waterfowl, only with a less definite purpose before me—till at last there dawned for me an ever-memorable Saturday in June.

I had again saved up enough money to carry my long-longed-for journey to Paris into execution. The *Seine's* boiler got up its steam, the *Seine's* white awning was put up for me as well as others; and on a beautiful cloudless English morning I stood by the man at the wheel, and saw St. Paul's and London Bridge and the Tower fade out of sight; with what hope and joy I cannot describe. I almost forgot that I was me!

And next morning (a beautiful French morning) how I exulted as I went up the Champs Elysées and passed under the familiar Arc de Triomphe on my way to the Rue de la Pompe, Passy and heard all around the familiar tongue that I still knew so well, and rebreathed the long-lost and half-forgotten, but now keenly remembered, fragrance of the *genius loci*; that vague, light, indescribable, almost imperceptible scent of a place, that is so heavily laden with the past for those who have lived there long ago—the most subtly intoxicating ether that can be!

When I came to the meeting of the Rue de la Tour and the Rue de la Pompe, and, looking in at the grocer's shop at the corner, I recognised the handsome mustachioed groceress, Madame Liard (whose mustache twelve prosperous years had turned gray), I was almost faint with emotion. Had any youth been ever so moved by that face before?

There, behind the window (which was now of plate-glass), and amongst splendid Napoleonic wares of a later day, were the same old India-rubber balls in coloured network; the same quivering lumps of fresh paste in brown paper, that looked so cool and tempting; the same three-sou boxes of water-colours (now marked seventy-five centimes), of which I had consumed so many in the service of Mimsey Seraskier! I went in and bought one, and resmelt with delight the smell of all my bygone dealings there, and received her familiar-sounding—

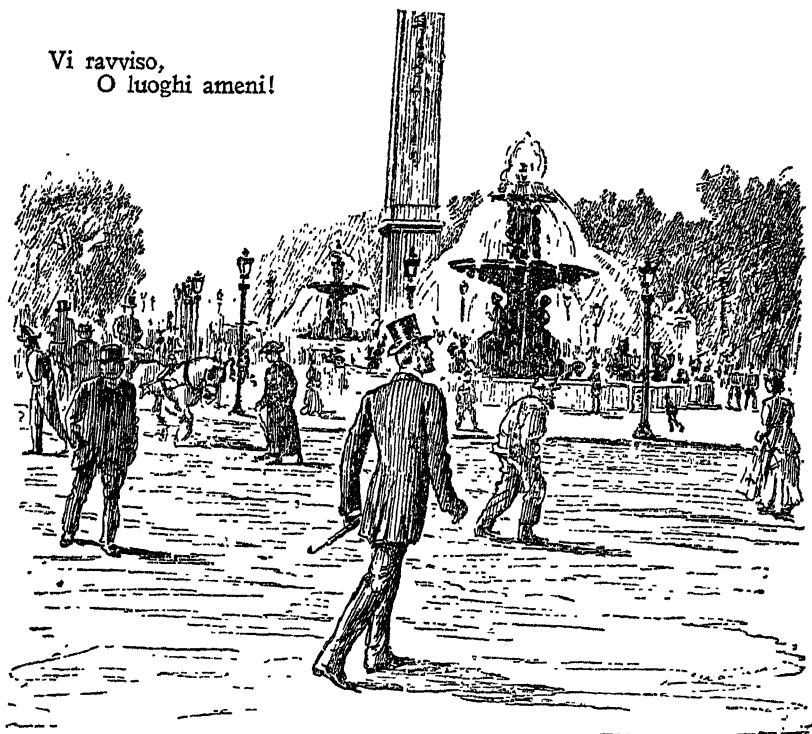
"Merci, monsieur! faudrait-il autre chose?" as if it had been a blessing; but I was too shy to throw myself into her arms and tell her that I was the "lone, wandering, but not lost" Gogo Pasquier. She might have said—

"Eh bien, et après?"

The day had begun well.

Like an epicure, I deliberated whether I should walk to the old gate in the Rue de la Pompe, and up the avenue and back to our old garden, or make my way round to the gap in the park hedge

Vi ravviso,
O luoghi ameni!



TO THE ELYSIAN FIELDS ONCE MORE.

that we had worn of old by our frequent passages in and out, to and from the Bois de Boulogne.

I chose the latter as, on the whole, the more promising in exquisite gradations of delight.

The gap in the park hedge, indeed! The park hedge had disappeared, the very park itself was gone, cut up, demolished, all parcelled out into small gardens, with trim white villas, except where a railway ran through a deep cutting in the chalk. A train actually roared and panted by, and choked me with its filthy steam as I looked round in stupefaction on the ruins of my long-cherished hope.

If that train had run over me and I had survived it, it could not have given me a greater shock; it all seemed too cruel and brutal an outrage.

A winding carriage road had been pierced through the very

heart of the wilderness; and on this, neatly paled little brand-new gardens abutted, and in these I would recognise, here and there, an old friend in the shape of some well-remembered tree that I had often climbed as a boy, and which had been left standing out of so many, but so changed by the loss of its old surroundings that it had a tame, caged, transplanted look—almost apologetic, and as if ashamed of being found out at last!

Nothing else remained. Little hills and cliffs and valleys and chalk pits that had once seemed big had been levelled up, or away, and I lost my bearings altogether, and felt a strange, creeping chill of blankness and bereavement.

But how about the avenue and my old home? I hastened back to the Rue de la Pompe with the quick step of aroused anxiety. The avenue was gone—blocked within a dozen yards of the gate by a huge brick building covered with newly-painted trellis-work! My old house was no more, but in its place a much larger and smarter edifice of sculptured stone. The old gate at least had not disappeared, nor the porter's lodge; and I feasted my sorrowful eyes on these poor remains, that looked snubbed and shabby and out of place in the midst of all this new splendour.

Presently a smart concierge, with a beautiful pink-ribboned cap, came out and stared at me for a while, and inquired if monsieur desired anything.

I could not speak.

"Est-ce que monsieur est indisposé? Cette chaleur! Monsieur ne parle pas le Français, peut-être?"

When I found my tongue I explained to her that I had once lived there in a modest house overlooking the street, but which had been replaced by this much more palatial abode.

"O, oui, monsieur—on a balayé tout ça!" she replied.

"Balayé!" What an expression for *me* to hear!

And she explained how the changes had taken place, and how valuable the property had become. She showed me a small plot of garden, a fragment of my old garden, that still remained, and where the old apple-tree might still have been, but that it had been sawed away. I saw the stump, that did duty for a rustic table.

Presently, looking over a new wall, I saw another small garden, and in it the ruins of the old shed where I had found the toy wheelbarrow—soon to disappear, as they were building there too.

I asked after all the people I could think of, beginning with those of least interest—the butcher, the baker, the candlestick-maker.

Some were dead; some had retired and had left their "commerce" to their children and children-in-law. Three different schoolmasters had kept the school since I had left. Thank Heaven, there was still the school—much altered, it is true. I had forgotten to look for it.

She had no remembrance of my name, or the Seraskiers'—I

asked with a beating heart. We had left no trace. Twelve short years had effaced all memory of us! But she told me that a gentleman, *décoré, mais tombé en enfance*, lived at a *maison de santé* in the Chaussée de la Muette, close by, and that his name was le Major Duquesnois; and thither I went, after rewarding and warmly thanking her.

I inquired for le Major Duquesnois, and was told he was out for a walk, and I soon found him, much aged and bent, and leaning on the arm of a Sister of Charity. I was so touched that I had to



THE OLD APPLE-TREE.

pass him two or three times before I could speak. He was so small—so pathetically small!

It was a long time before I could give him an idea of who I was—Gogo Pasquier!

Then after a while he seemed to recall the past a little.

"Ha, ha! Gogo—gentil petit Gogo!—oui—oui—l'exercice? Portez.... arrmes! arrmes.... bras! Et Mimsé! bonne petite Mimsé! toujours mal à la tête!"

He could just remember Madame Seraskier; and repeated her name several times, and said, "Ah! elle était bien belle, Madame Seraskier!"

In the old days of fairy-tale-telling, when he used to get tired and I still wanted him to go on, he had arranged that if, in the course of the story, he suddenly brought in the word "Cric", and I failed to immediately answer "Crac," the story would be put

off till our next walk (to be continued in our next!), and he was so ingenious in the way he brought in the terrible word that I often fell into the trap, and had to forgo my delight for that afternoon.

I suddenly thought of saying "Cric!" and he immediately said "Crac!" and laughed in a touching, senile way—"Cric!—crac! c'est bien ça!" and then he became quite serious and said—

"Et la suite au prochain numéro!"

After this he began to cough, and the good Sister said—

"Je crains que monsieur ne le fatigue un peu!"

So I had to bid him good-bye; and after I had squeezed and



M. LE MAJOR.

kissed his hand, he made me a most courtly bow, as though I had been a complete stranger.

I rushed away, tossing up my arms like a madman in my pity and sorrow for my dear old friend, and my general regret and disenchantment. I made for the Bois de Boulogne there to find, instead of the old rabbit-and-roebuck-haunted thickets and ferneries and impenetrable undergrowth, a huge artificial lake, with row-boats and skiffs, and a rockery that would have held its own in Rosherville gardens. And on the way thither, near the iron gates in the fortifications, whom should I meet but one of my old friends the couriers on his way from St. Cloud to the Tuileries? There he rode with his arms jogging up and down, and his low glazed hat, and his immense jack-boots, just the same as ever, never rising in

his stirrups, as his horse trotted to the jingle of the sweet little chime round its neck.

Alas! his coat was no longer the innocent, unsophisticated blue and silver livery of the bourgeois king, but the hateful green and gold of another régime.

Farther on the Mare d'Auteuil itself had suffered change and become respectable—imperially respectable. No more frogs or newts or water-beetles, I felt sure; but gold and silver fish in vulgar Napoleonic profusion.

No words that I can find would give any idea of the sadness and longing that filled me as I trod once more that sunlit grassy brink—the goal of my fond ambition for twelve long years.

It was Sunday, and many people were about—many children, in their best Sunday clothes and on their best behaviour, discreetly throwing crumbs to the fish. A new generation, much quieter and better dressed than my cousins and I, who had once so filled the solitude with the splashing of our nets, and the excited din of our English voices.

As I sat down on a bench by the old willow (where the rat lived), and gazed and gazed, it almost surprised me that the very intensity of my desire did not of itself suffice to call up the old familiar faces and forms, and conjure away these modern intruders. The power to do this seemed almost within my reach; I willed and willed and willed with all my might, but in vain; I could not cheat my sight or hearing for a moment. There they remained, unconscious and undisturbed, those happy, well-mannered, well-appointed little French people, and fed the gold and silver fish; and there, with an aching heart, I left them.

Oh, surely, surely, I cried to myself, we ought to find some means of possessing the past more fully and completely than we do. Life is not worth living for many of us if a want so desperate and yet so natural can never be satisfied. Memory is but a poor rudimentary thing that we had better be without, if it can only lead us to the verge of consummation like this, and madden us with a desire it cannot slake. The touch of a vanished hand, the sound of a voice that is still, the tender grace of a day that is dead, should be ours for ever, at our beck and call, by some exquisite and quite conceivable illusion of the senses.

Alas! alas! I have hardly the hope of ever meeting my beloved ones again in another life. Oh to meet their too dimly remembered forms in *this*, just as they once were, by some trick of my own brain! To see them with the eye, and hear them with the ear, and tread with them the old obliterated ways as in a waking dream! It would be well worth going mad to become such a self-conjurer as that.

Thus musing sadly, I reached St. Cloud, and *that*, at least, and the Boulogne that led to it, had not been very perceptibly altered, and looked as if I had only left them a week ago. The sweet aspect from the bridge, on either side and beyond, filled me with the

old enchantment. There, at least, the glory had not departed.

I hastened through the gilded gates and up the broad walk to the grand cascade. There, among the lovely wreathed urns and jars of geranium, still sat or reclined or gesticulated the old unalterable gods; there squatted the grimly genial monsters in granite and marble and bronze, still spouting their endless gallons for the delectation of hot Parisian eyes. Unchanged, and to all appearance unchangeable (save that they were not nearly so big as I had imagined) their cold, smooth, ironical patience shamed and braced me into better cheer. Beautiful, hideous, whatever you please, they seemed to revel in the very sense of their insensibility, of their eternal stability—their stony scorn of time and wind and weather, and the peevish, weak-kneed, shortlived discontent of man. It was good to fondly pat them on the back once more—when one could reach them—and cling to them for a little while, after all the dust and drift and ruin I had been tramping through all day!

Indeed, they woke in me a healthy craving for all but forgotten earthly joys—even for wretched meat and drink—so I went and ordered a sumptuous repast at the Tête Noire—a brand-new Tête Noire, alas! quite white, all in stone and stucco, and without a history!

It was a beautiful sunset. Waiting for my dinner, I gazed out of the first-floor window, and found balm for my disappointed and regretful spirit in all that democratic joyousness of French Sunday life. I had seen it over and over again just like that in the old days; *this*, at least, was like coming back home to something I had known and loved.

The cafés on the little "Place" between the bridge and the park were full to overflowing. People chatting over their *consommations* sat right out, almost into the middle of the square, so thickly packed that there was scarcely room for the busy, lively white aproned waiters to move between them. The air was full of the scent of trodden grass and macaroons and French tobacco, blown from the park; of gay French laughter and the music of *mirlitons*; of a light dusty haze, shot with purple and gold by the setting sun. The river, alive with boats and canoes, repeated the glory of the sky, and the well-remembered, thickly-wooded hill rose before me, culminating in the Lanterne de Diogène.

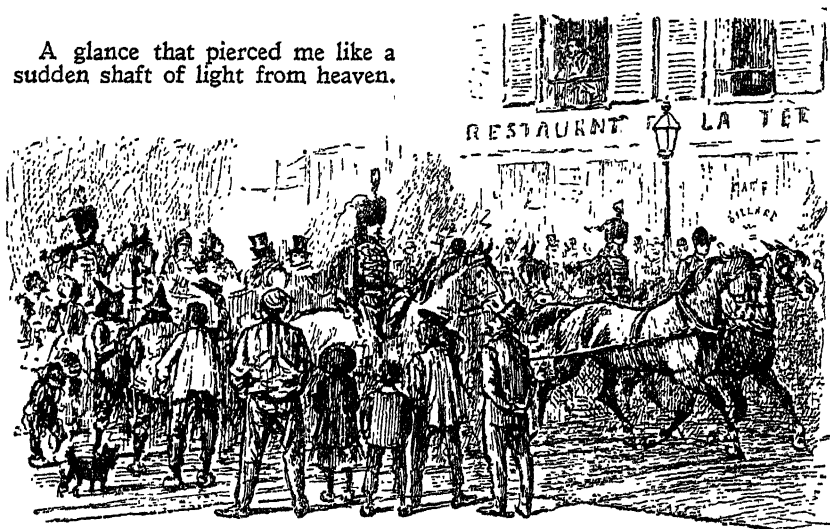
I could have threaded all that maze of trees blindfolded.

Two Roman pifferari came on to the Place and began to play an extraordinary and most exciting melody that almost drew me out of window; it seemed to have no particular form, no beginning or middle or end; it went soaring higher and higher, like the song of a lark, with never a pause for breath, to the time of a maddening jig—a tarantella, perhaps—always on the strain and stress, always getting nearer and nearer to some shrill climax of ecstasy quite high up and away, beyond the scope of earthly music; while the persistent drone kept buzzing of the earth and the impossibility to escape. All so gay, so sad, there is no name for it!

Two little deformed and discarded-looking dwarfs, beggars, brother and sister, with large toothless gaps for mouths and no upper lip, began to dance; and the crowd laughed and applauded. Higher and higher, nearer and nearer to the impossible, rose the quick, piercing notes of the piffero. Heaven seemed almost within reach—the nirvana of music after its quick madness—the region of the ultra-treble that lies beyond the ken of ordinary human ears!

A carriage and four, with postilions and “guides,” came clattering

A glance that pierced me like a sudden shaft of light from heaven.



SUMMER LIGHTNING

royally down the road from the palace, and dispersed the crowd as it bowled on its way to the bridge. In it were two ladies and two gentlemen. One of the ladies was the young Empress of the French; the other looked up at my window—for a moment, as in a soft flash of summer lightning, her face seemed ablaze with friendly recognition—with a sweet glance of kindness and interest and surprise—a glance that pierced me like a sudden shaft of light from heaven.

It was the Duchess of Towers!

I felt as though the bagpipes had been leading up to this! In a moment more the carriage was out of sight, the sun had quite gone down, the pifferari had ceased to play and were walking round with the hat, and all was over.

I dined, and made my way back to Paris on foot through the Bois de Boulogne, and by the Mare d'Auteuil, and saw my old friend the water-rat swim across it, trailing the gleam of his wake after him, like a silver comet's tail!

"Allons-nous-en, gens de la noce!
Allons-nous-en chacun chez nous!"

So sang a festive wedding-party as it went merrily arm in arm through the long High Street of Passy, with a gleeful trust that would have filled the heart with envy but for sad experience of the vanity of human wishes.

Chacun chez nous! How charming it sounds!

Was each so sure that when he reached his home he would find his heart's desire? Was the bridegroom himself so very sure?

The heart's desire—the heart's regret! I flattered myself that I had pretty well sounded the uttermost depths of both on that eventful Sunday!

PART FOURTH

I got back to my hotel in the Rue de la Michodière.

Prostrate with emotion and fatigue, the tarantella still jingling in my ears, and that haunting, beloved face, with its ineffable smile, still printed on the retina of my closed eyes, I fell asleep.

And then I dreamed a dream, and the first phase of my real inner life began!

All the events of the day, distorted and exaggerated and jumbled together after the usual manner of dreams, wove themselves into a kind of nightmare and oppression. I was on my way to my old abode! everything that I met or saw was grotesque and impossible, yet had now the strange, vague charm of association and reminiscence, now the distressing sense of change and loss and desolation.

As I got near to the avenue gate, instead of the school on my left there was a prison; and at the door a little thick-set jailer, three feet high and much deformed; and a little deformed jaileress no bigger than himself, were cunningly watching me out of the corners of their eyes, and toothlessly smiling. Presently they began to waltz together to an old, familiar tune, with their enormous keys dangling at their sides; and they looked so funny that I laughed and applauded. But soon I perceived that their crooked faces were not really funny; indeed, they were fatal and terrible in the extreme, and I was soon conscious that these deadly dwarfs were trying to waltz between me and the avenue gate for which I was bound—to cut me off, that they might run me into the prison, where it was their custom to hang people of a Monday morning.

In an agony of terror I made a rush for the avenue gate, and there stood the Dutchess of Towers, with mild surprise in her eyes and a kind smile—a heavenly vision of strength and reality.

"You are not dreaming true!" she said. "Don't be afraid—those little people don't exist! Give me your hand and come in here."

And as I did so she waved the troglodytes away, and they vanished; and I felt that this was no longer a dream, but something else—some strange thing that had happened to me, some new life that I had woke up to.

For at the touch of her hand my consciousness, my sense of being I, myself, which hitherto in my dream (as in all previous dreams up to then) had been only partial, intermittent, and vague, suddenly blazed into full, consistent, practical activity—just as it is in life, when one is well awake and much interested in what is going on—only with perceptions far keener and more alert.

I knew perfectly who I was and what I was, and remembered all the events of the previous day. I was conscious that my real

body, undressed and in bed, now lay fast asleep in a small room on the fourth floor of an *hôtel garni* in the Rue de la Michodière. I knew this perfectly; and yet here was my body too, just as substantial, with all my clothes on; my boots rather dusty, my shirt collar damp with the heat, for it was hot. With my disengaged hand I felt in my trousers pocket; there were my London latch-key, my purse, my penknife; my handkerchief in the breast-pocket of my coat, and in its tail-pockets my gloves and pipe-case, and the little water-colour box I had bought that morning. I looked at my watch; it was going, and marked eleven. I pinched myself,



PREMIÈRE COMMUNION.

I coughed, I did all one usually does under the pressure of some immense surprise, to assure myself that I was awake; and I *was*, and yet here I stood, actually hand in hand with a great lady to whom I had never been introduced (and who seemed much tickled at my confusion); and staring now at her, now at my old school.

The prison had tumbled down like a house of cards, and lo! in its place was M. Saindou's *maison d'éducation*, just as it had been of old. I even recognised on the yellow wall the stamp of a hand in dry mud, made fifteen years ago by a day boy called Parisot, who had fallen down in the gutter close by, and thus left his mark on getting up again; and it had remained there for months, till it had been whitewashed away in the holidays. Here it was anew, after fifteen years.

The swallows were flying and twittering. A yellow omnibus was drawn up to the gates of the school; the horses stamped and neighed and bit each other, as French horses always did in those days. The driver swore at them perfunctorily.

A crowd was looking on—le Père et la Mère François, Madame Liard, the grocer's wife, and other people, whom I remembered at once with delight. Just in front of us a small boy and girl were looking on, like the rest, and I recognised the back and the cropped head and thin legs of Mimsey Seraskier.

A barrel organ was playing a pretty tune I knew quite well, and had forgotten.

The school gates opened, and M. Saindou, proud and full of self-importance (as he always was), and half a dozen boys whose faces and names were quite familiar to me, in smart white trousers and shining boots, and silken white bands round their left arms, got into the omnibus, and were driven away in a glorified manner—as it seemed—to heaven in a golden chariot. It was beautiful to see and hear.

I was still holding the duchess's hand, and felt the warmth of it through her glove; it stole up my arm like a magnetic current. I was in Elysium; a heavenly sense had come over me that at last my periphery had been victoriously invaded by a spirit other than mine—a most powerful and beneficent spirit. There was a blessed fault in my impenetrable armour of self, after all, and the genius of strength and charity and loving-kindness had found it out.

"Now you're dreaming true," she said. "Where are those boys going?"

"To church, to make their *première communion*," I replied.

"That's right. You're dreaming true because I've got you by the hand. Do you know that tune?"

I listened, and the words belonging to it came out of the past and I said to her, and she laughed again, with her eyes screwed up deliciously.

"Quite right—quite," she exclaimed. "How odd that you should know them! How well you pronounce French for an Englishman! For you are Mr. Ibbetson, Lady Cray's architect?"

I assented, and she let go my hand.

The street was full of people—familiar forms and faces and voices, chatting together and looking down the road after the yellow omnibus; old attitudes, old tricks of gait and manner, old forgotten French ways of speech—all as it was long ago. Nobody noticed us, and we walked up the now deserted avenue.

The happiness, the enchantment of it all! Could it be that I was dead, that I had died suddenly in my sleep, at the hotel in the Rue de la Michodière? Could it be that the Duchess of Towers was dead too—had been killed by some accident on her way from St. Cloud to Paris? and that, both having died so near each other in time and space, we had begun our eternal after-life in this heavenly fashion?

That was too good to be true, I reflected; some instinct told me that this was not death, but transcendent earthly life—and also, alas! that it would not endure for ever!

I was deeply conscious of every feature in her face, every movement of her body, every detail of her dress—more so than I could have been in actual life—and said to myself, "Whatever this is, it is no dream." But I felt there was about me the unspeakable elation which can come to us only in our waking moments when we are at our very best; and then only feebly, in comparison with this, and to many of us never. It never had to me, since that morning when I had found the little wheelbarrow.

I was also conscious, however, that the avenue itself had a slight touch of the dream in it. It was no longer quite right, and was getting out of drawing and perspective, so to speak. I had lost my stay—the touch of her hand.

"Are you still dreaming true, Mr. Ibbetson?"

"I am afraid not quite," I replied.

"You must try by yourself a little—try hard. Look at this house; what is written on the portico?"

I saw written in gold letters the words, "Tête Noire," and said so.

She rippled with laughter, and said, "No; try again;" and just touched me with the tip of her finger for a moment.

I tried again, and said, "Parvis Notre Dame."

"That's rather better," she said, and touched me again; and I read, "Parva sed Aptā," as I had so often read there before in old days.

"And now look at that old house over there," pointing to my old home; "how many windows are there in the top story?"

I said seven.

"No; there are five. Look again!" and there were five; and the whole house was exactly, down to its minutest detail, as it had been once upon a time. I could see Thérèse through one of the windows, making my bed.

"That's better," said the duchess; "you will soon do it—it's very easy—*ce n'est que le premier pas!* My father taught me; you must always sleep on your back with your arms above your head, your hands clasped under it and your feet crossed, the right one over the left, unless you are left-handed; and you must never for a moment cease thinking of where you want to be in your dream till you are asleep and get there; and you must never forget in your dream where and what you were when awake. You must join the dream on to reality. Don't forget. And now I will say good-bye; but before I go give me both your hands and look round everywhere as far as your eye can see."

It was hard to look away from her; her face drew my eyes, and through them all my heart; but I did as she told me, and took in the whole familiar scene, even to the distant woods of Ville d'Avray, a glimpse of which was visible through an opening in the trees; even to the smoke of a train making its way to Versailles, miles off; and the old telegraph, working its black arms on the top of Mont Valérien.

"Is it all right?" she asked. "That's well. Henceforward, whenever you come here, you will be safe as far as your sight can reach—from this spot—all through my introduction. See what it is to have a friend at court! No more little dancing jailers! And then you can gradually get farther by yourself.

"Out there, through that park, leads to the Bois de Boulogne—there's a gap in the hedge you can get through; but mind and make everything plain in front of you—*true*, before you go a step farther, or else you'll have to wake and begin it all over again. You have only to will it, and think of yourself as awake, and it will come—on condition, of course, that you have been there before. And mind, also, you must take care how you touch things or people—you may hear, and see, and smell; but you mustn't touch, nor pick flowers or leaves, nor move things about. It blurs the dream, like breathing on a window-pane. I don't know why, but it does. You must remember that everything here is dead and gone by. With you and me it is different; we're alive and real—that is, *I* am; and there would seem to be no mistake about your being real too, Mr. Ibbetson, by the grasp of your hands. But you're *not*; and why you are here, and what business you have in this, my particular dream, I cannot understand; no living person has ever come into it before. I can't make it out. I suppose it's because I saw your reality this afternoon, looking out of window at the 'Tête Noire,' and you are just a stray figment of my overtired brain—a very agreeable figment, I admit; but you don't exist here just now—you can't possibly; you are somewhere else, Mr. Ibbetson; dancing at Mabilie, perhaps, or fast asleep somewhere, and dreaming of French churches and palaces, and public fountains, like a good young British architect—otherwise I shouldn't talk to you like this, you may be sure!

"Never mind. I am very glad to dream that I have been of use to you, and you are very welcome here, if it amuses you to come—especially as you are only a false dream of mine, for what else *can* you be? And now I must leave you, so good-bye."

She disengaged her hands, and laughed her angelic laugh, and then turned toward the park. I watched her tall, straight figure and blowing skirts, and saw her follow some ladies and children into a thicket that I remembered well, and she was soon out of sight.

I felt as if all warmth had gone out of my life; as if a joy had taken flight; as if a precious something had withdrawn itself from my possession, and the gap in my periphery had closed again.

Long I stood in thought, with my eyes fixed on the spot where she had disappeared; and I felt inclined to follow, but then considered this would not have been discreet. For although she was only a false dream of mine, a mere recollection of the exciting and eventful day, a stray figment of my overtired and excited brain—a *more* than agreeable figment (what else *could* she be!)—she was also a

great lady, and had treated me, a perfect stranger and a perfect nobody, with singular courtesy and kindness; which I repaid, it is true, with a love so deep and strong that my very life was hers, to do what she liked with, and always had been since I first saw her, and always would be as long as there was breath in my body! But this did not constitute an acquaintance without a proper introduction, even in France—even in a dream. Even in dreams one must be polite, even to stray figments of one's tired, sleeping brain.

And then what business had *she*, in *this*, my particular dream—as she herself had asked of me?

But *was* it a dream? I remembered my lodgings at Pentonville



A DREAM FAREWELL

that I had left yesterday morning. I remembered what I was—why I came to Paris; I remembered the very bedroom at the Paris hotel where I was now fast asleep, its loudly ticking clock, and all the meagre furniture. And here was I, broad awake and conscious, in the middle of an old avenue that had long ceased to exist—that had been built over by a huge brick edifice covered with newly-painted trelliswork. I saw it, this edifice, myself, only twelve hours ago. And yet here was everything as it had been when I was a child; and all through the agency of this solid phantom of a lovely young English duchess, whose warm gloved hands I had only this minute been holding in mine! The scent of her gloves was still in my palm. I looked at my watch; it marked twenty-three minutes to twelve. All this had happened in less than three-quarters of an hour!

Pondering over all this in hopeless bewilderment, I turned my steps toward my old home, and, to my surprise, was just able to look over the garden wall, which I had once thought about ten feet high.

Under the old apple-tree in full bloom sat my mother, darning small socks; with her flaxen side-curls (as it was her fashion to wear them) half-concealing her face. My emotion and astonishment were immense. My heart beat fast. I felt its pulse in my temples, and my breath was short.

At a little green table that I remembered well sat a small boy, rather quaintly dressed in a bygone fashion, with a frill round his wide shirt collar, and his golden hair cut quite close at the top, and rather long at the sides and back. It was Gogo Pasquier. He seemed a very nice little boy. He had pen and ink and copybook before him, and a gilt-edged volume bound in red morocco. I knew it at a glance; it was *Elegant Extracts*. The dog Médor lay asleep in the shade. The bees were droning among the nasturtiums and convolvulus.

A little girl ran up the avenue from the porter's lodge and pushed the garden gate, which rang the bell as it opened, and she went into the garden, and I followed her; but she took no notice of me, nor did the others. It was Mimsey Seraskier.

I went and sat at my mother's feet, and looked long in her face.

I must not speak to her, nor touch her—not even touch her busy hand with my lips, or I should “blur the dream.”

I got up and looked over the boy Gogo's shoulder. He was translating Gray's *Elegy* into French; he had not got very far, and seemed to be stumped by the line—

“And leaves the world to darkness and to me.”

Mimsey was silently looking over his other shoulder, her thumb in her mouth, one arm on the back of his chair. She seemed to be stumped also; it was an awkward line to translate.

I stooped and put my hand to Médor's nose, and felt his warm breath. He wagged his rudiment of a tail, and whimpered in his sleep. Mimsey said—

“Regarde Médor, comme il remue la queue! *C'est le Prince Charmant qui lui chatouille le bout du nez.*”

Said my mother, who had not spoken hitherto: “Do speak English, Mimsey, please.”

O my God! My mother's voice, so forgotten, yet so familiar, so unutterably dear! I rushed to her, and threw myself on my knees at her feet, and seized her hand and kissed it, crying, “Mother, mother!”

A strange blur came over everything; the sense of reality was lost. All became as a dream—a beautiful dream—but only a dream; and I woke.

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I woke in my small hotel bedroom, and saw all the furniture, and my hat and clothes, by the light of a lamp outside, and heard the ticking of the clock on the mantelpiece, and the rumbling of a cart and cracking of a whip in the street, and yet felt I was not a bit more awake than I had been a minute ago in my strange vision—not so much!

I heard my watch ticking its little tick on the mantelpiece by the side of the clock, like a pony trotting by a big horse. The



“MOTHER, MOTHER!”

clock struck twelve. I got up and looked at my watch by the light of the gaslit streets; it marked the same. My dream had lasted an hour—I had gone to bed at half-past ten.

I tried to recall it all, and did so to the smallest particular—all except the tune the organ had played, and the words belonging to it; they were on the tip of my tongue, and refused to come further. I got up again and walked about the room, and felt that it had not been like a dream at all; it was more “recollectable” than all my real adventures of the previous day. It had ceased to be like a dream, and had become an actuality from the moment I first touched the duchess’s hand to the moment I kissed my mother’s, and the blur came. It was an entirely new and utterly bewildering experience that I had gone through.

In a dream there are always breaks, inconsistencies, lapses, in-

coherence, breaches of continuity, many links missing in the chain; only at points is the impression vivid enough to stamp itself afterward on the waking mind, and even then it is never so really vivid as the impression of real life, although it ought to have seemed so in the dream. One remembers it well on awaking, but soon it fades, and then it is only one's remembrance of it that one remembers.

There was nothing of this in my dream.

It was something like the "camera-obscura" on Ramsgate pier: one goes in and finds one's self in total darkness; the eye is prepared; one is thoroughly expectant and wide-awake.

Suddenly there flashes on the sight the moving picture of the port and all the life therein, and the houses and cliffs beyond; and farther still the green hills, the white clouds, and blue sky.

Little green waves chase each other in the harbour, breaking into crisp white foam. Sea-gulls wheel and dash and dip behind masts and ropes and pulleys; shiny brass fittings on gangway and compass flash in the sun without dazzling the eye; gay Lilliputians walk and talk, their white teeth, no bigger than a pin's point, gleam in laughter, with never a sound; a steamboat laden with excursionists comes in, its paddles churning the water, and you cannot hear them. Not a detail is missed—not a button on a sailor's jacket, not a hair on his face. All the light and colour of sea and earth and sky, that serve for many a mile, are here concentrated within a few square feet. And what colour it is! A painter's despair! It is light itself, more beautiful than that which streams through old church windows of stained glass. And all is framed in utter darkness, so that the fully dilated pupils can see their very utmost. It seems as though all had been painted life-size and then shrunk, like a Japanese picture on crape, to a millionth of its natural size, so as to intensify and mellow the effect.

It is all over: you come out into the open sunshine, and all seems garish and bare and bald and commonplace. All magic has faded out of the scene; everything is too far away from everything else; everybody one meets seems coarse and Brobdingnagian and too near. And one has been looking at the like of it all one's life!

Thus with my dream, compared to common, waking, everyday experience; only instead of being mere flat, silent little images moving on a dozen square feet of Bristol board, and appealing to the eye alone, the things and people in my dream had the same roundness and relief as in life, and were life-size; one could move amongst them and behind them, and feel as if one could touch and clasp and embrace them if one dared. And the ear, as well as the eye, was made free of this dark chamber of the brain: one heard their speech and laughter as in life. And that was not all, for soft breezes fanned the cheek, the sparrows twittered, the sun gave out its warmth, and the scent of many flowers made the illusion complete.

And then the Duchess of Towers! She had been not only visible

and audible like the rest, but tangible as well, to the fullest extent of the sensibility that lay in my nerves of touch; when my hands held hers I felt as though I were drawing all her life into mine.

With the exception of that one figure, all had evidently been as it *had* been in *reality* a few years ago, to the very droning of an insect, to the very fall of a blossom!

Had I gone mad by any chance? I had possessed the past, as I had longed to do a few hours before.

What are sight and hearing and touch and the rest?

Five senses in all.

The stars, worlds upon worlds, so many billions of miles away, what are they for us but mere shiny specks on a network of nerves behind the eye? How does one *feel* them there?

The sound of my friend's voice, what is it? The clasp of his hand, the pleasant sight of his face, the scent of his pipe and mine, the taste of the bread and cheese and beer we eat and drink together, what are they but figments (stray figments, perhaps) of the brain—little thrills through nerves made on purpose, and without which there would be no stars, no pipe, no bread and cheese and beer, no voice, no friend, no me?

And is there, perchance, some sixth sense embedded somewhere in the thickness of the flesh—some survival of the past, of the race, of our own childhood even, etiolated by disuse? or some rudiment, some effort to begin, some priceless hidden faculty to be developed into a future source of bliss and consolation for our descendants? some nerve that now can only be made to thrill and vibrate in a dream, too delicate as yet to ply its function in the light of common day?

And was I, of all people in the world—I, Peter Ibbetson, architect and surveyor, Wharton Street, Pentonville—most futile, desultory, and uneducated dreamer of dreams—destined to make some great psychical discovery?

Pondering deeply over these solemn things, I sent myself to sleep again, as was natural enough—but no more to dream. I slept soundly until late in the morning, and breakfasted at the Bains Deligny, a delightful swimming-bath near the Pont de la Concorde (on the other side), and spent most of the day there, alternately swimming, and dozing, and smoking cigarettes, and thinking of the wonders of the night before, and hoping for their repetition on the night to follow.

I remained a week in Paris, loafing about by day among old haunts of my childhood—a melancholy pleasure—and at night trying to “dream true,” as my dream duchess had called it. Only once did I succeed.

I had gone to bed thinking most persistently of the “*Mare d’Auteuil*,” and it seemed to me that as soon as I was fairly asleep I woke up there, and knew directly that I had come into a “true dream” again, by the reality and the bliss. It was transcendent *life* once

more—a very ecstasy of remembrance made actual, and *such* an exquisite surprise!

There was M. le Major, in his green frockcoat, on his knees near a little hawthorn-tree by the brink, among the water-logged roots of which there dwelt a cunning old dytiscus as big as the bowl of a tablespoon—a prize we had often tried to catch in vain.

M. le Major had a net in his hand, and was watching the water



THE MAJOR AND THE WATER-BEETLE.

intently; the perspiration was trickling down his nose; and around him, in silent expectation and suspense, were grouped Gogo and Mimsey and my three cousins, and a good-humoured freckled Irish boy I had quite forgotten, and I suddenly remembered that his name was Johnstone, that he was very combative, and that he lived in the Rue Basse (now Rue Raynouard).

On the other side of the pond my mother was keeping Médor from the water, for fear of his spoiling the sport, and on the bench by the willow sat Madame Seraskier—lovely Madame Seraskier—deeply interested. I sat down by her side and gazed at her with a joy there is no telling.

An old woman came by, selling conical wafer-cakes, and singing, "*V'là l'plaisir, mesdames—V'là l'plaisir!*" Madame Seraskier bought ten sous' worth—a mountain!

M. le Major made a dash with his net—unsuccessfully, as usual. Médor was let loose, and plunged with a plunge that made big

waves all round the *mare*, and dived after an imaginary stone, amid general shouts and shrieks of excitement. O the familiar voices! I almost wept.

Médor came out of the water without his stone and shook himself, twisting and barking and grinning and gyrating, as was his way, quite close to me. In my delight and sympathy I was ill-advised enough to try and stroke him, and straight the dream was "blurred"—changed to an ordinary dream, where all things were jumbled up and incomprehensible; a dream pleasant enough, but different in kind and degree—an *ordinary* dream; and in my distress thereat I woke, and failed to dream again (as I wished to dream) that night.

Next morning (after an early swim) I went to the Louvre, and stood spellbound before Leonardo da Vinci's "Lisa Gioconda," trying hard to find where the wondrous beauty lay that I had heard so extravagantly extolled; and not trying very successfully, for I had seen Madame Seraskier once more, and felt that "Gioconda" was a fraud.

Presently I was conscious of a group just behind me, and heard a pleasant male English voice exclaim—

"And now, duchess, let me present you to my first and last and only love, Monna Lisa." I turned round, and there stood a soldier-like old gentleman and two ladies (one of whom was the Duchess of Towers), staring at the picture.

As I made way for them I caught her eye, and in it again, as I felt sure, a kindly look of recognition—just for half a second. She evidently recollected having seen me at Lady Cray's, where I had stood all the evening alone in a rather conspicuous corner. I was so exceptionally tall (in those days of not such tall people as now) that it was easy to notice and remember me, especially as I wore my beard, which it was unusual to do then among Englishmen.

She little guessed how I remembered *her*; she little knew all she was and had been to me—in life and in a dream!

My emotion was so great that I felt it in my very knees; I could scarcely walk; I was as weak as water. My worship for the beautiful stranger was becoming almost a madness. She was even more lovely than Madame Seraskier. It was cruel to be like that.

It seems that I was fated to fall down and prostrate myself before very tall, slender women, with dark hair and lily skins and light angelic eyes. The fair damsel who sold tripe and pigs' feet in Clerkenwell was also of that type, I remembered; and so was Mrs. Deane. Fortunately for me it is not a common one!

All that day I spent on quays and bridges, leaning over parapets, and looking at the Seine, and nursing my sweet despair, and calling myself the biggest fool in Paris, and recalling over and over again that gray-blue kindly glance—my only light, the Light of the World for ME!

My brief holiday over, I went back to London—to Pentonville

—and resumed my old occupations; but the whole tenor of my existence was changed.

The day, the working-day (and I worked harder than ever, to Lintot's great satisfaction), passed as in an unimportant dream of mild content and cheerful acquiescence in everything, work or play.

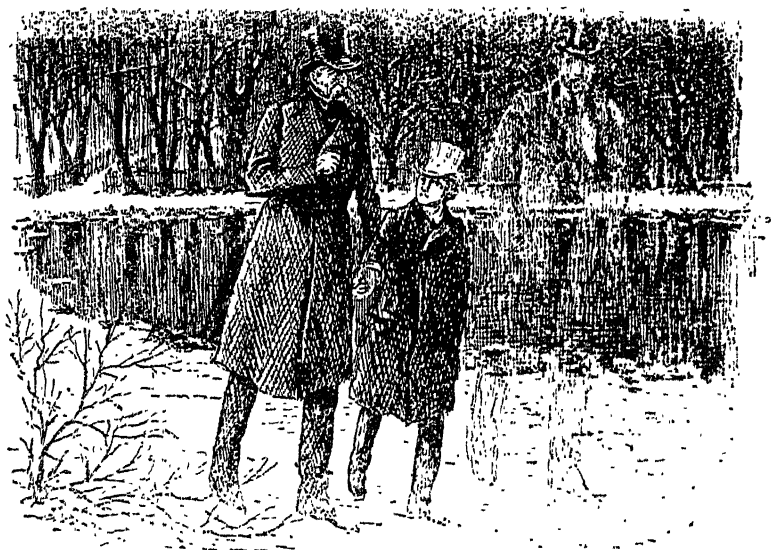
There was no more quarrelling with my destiny, nor wish to escape from myself for a moment. My whole being, as I went about on business or recreation bent, was suffused with the memory of the Duchess of Towers as with a warm inner glow that kept me at peace with all mankind and myself, and thrilled by the hope, the enchanting hope, of once more meeting her image at night in a dream, in or about my old home at Passy, and perhaps even feeling once more that ineffable bliss of touching her hand. Though why should she be there?

When the blessed hour came round for sleep, the real business of my life began. I practised "dreaming true" as one practises a fine art, and after many failures I became a professed expert—a master.

I lay straight on my back, with my feet crossed, and my hands clasped above my head in a symmetrical position; I would fix my will intently and persistently on a certain point in space and time that was within my memory—for instance, the avenue gate on a certain Christmas afternoon, when I remembered waiting for M. le Major to go for a walk—at the same time never losing touch of my own present identity as Peter Ibbetson, architect, Wharton Street, Pentonville; all of which is not so easy to manage as one might think, although the dream duchess had said, "*Ce n'est que le premier pas qui coûte*"; and finally one night, instead of dreaming the ordinary dreams I had dreamed all my life (but twice), I had the rapture of *waking up*, the minute I was fairly asleep, by the avenue gate, and of seeing Gogo Pasquier sitting on one of the stone posts and looking up the snowy street for the major. Presently he jumped up to meet his old friend, whose bottle-green-clad figure had just appeared in the distance. I saw and heard their warm and friendly greeting, and walked unperceived by their side through Auteuil to the *mare*, and back by the fortifications, and listened to the thrilling adventures of one Fier-à-bras, which, I confess, I had completely forgotten.

As we passed all three together through the "Porte de la Muette," M. le Major's powers of memory (or invention) began to flag a little—for he suddenly said, "*Cric!*" But Gogo pitilessly answered, "*Crac!*" and the story had to go on, till we reached at dusk the gate of the Pasquiers' house, where these two most affectionately parted, after making an appointment for the morrow; and I went in with Gogo, and sat in the schoolroom while Thérèse gave him his tea, and heard her tell him all that had happened in Passy that afternoon. Then he read and summed and translated with his mother till it was time to go up to bed, and I sat by his bedside as he

was lulled asleep by his mother's harp.... how I listened with all my ears and heart, till the sweet strain ceased for the night! Then out of the hushed house I stole, thinking unutterable things—through the snow-clad garden, where Médor was baying the moon—through the silent avenue and park—through the deserted streets of Passy—and on by desolate quays and bridges to dark quarters of Paris; till I fell awake in my tracks and found that another dreary and commonplace day had dawned over London—but no longer



THE STORY OF THE GIANT FIER-À-BRAS.

dreary and commonplace for me, with such experiences to look back and forward to—such a strange inheritance of wonder and delight!

I had a few more occasional failures, such as, for instance, when the thread between my waking and sleeping life was snapped by a moment's carelessness, or possibly by some movement of my body in bed, in which case the vision would suddenly get blurred, the reality of it destroyed, and an ordinary dream rise in its place. My immediate consciousness of this was enough to wake me on the spot, and I would begin again, *da capo*, till all went as I wished.

Evidently our brain contains something akin both to a photographic plate and a phonographic cylinder, and many other things of the same kind not yet discovered; not a sight or a sound or a smell is lost; not a taste or a feeling or an emotion. Unconscious memory records them all, without our even heeding what goes on around us beyond the things that attract our immediate interest or attention.

Thus night after night I saw reacted before me scenes not only fairly remembered, but scenes utterly forgotten, and yet as unmistakably true as the remembered ones, and all bathed in that ineffable light, the light of other days—the light that never was on sea or land, and yet the light of absolute truth.

How it transcends in value as well as in beauty the garish light of common day, by which poor humanity has hitherto been content to live and die, disdaining through lack of knowledge the shadow for the substance, the spirit for the matter! I verified the truth of these sleeping experiences in every detail: old family letters I had preserved, and which I studied on awaking, confirmed what I had seen and heard in my dream; old stories explained themselves. It was all bygone truth, garnered in some remote corner of the brain, and brought out of the dim past as I willed, and made actual once more.

And strange to say, and most inexplicable, I saw it all as an independent spectator, an outsider, not as an actor going again through scenes in which he has played a part before!

Yet many things perplexed and puzzled me.

For instance, Gogo's back, and the back of his head, when I stood behind him, were as visible and apparently as true to life as his face, and I had never seen his back or the back of his head; it was much later in life that I learned the secret of two mirrors. And then, when Gogo went out of the room, sometimes apparently passing through me as he did so and coming out at the other side (with a momentary blurring of the dream), the rest would go on talking just as reasonably, as naturally, as before. Could the trees and walls and furniture have had ears and eyes, those long-vanished trees and walls and furniture that existed now only in my sleeping brain, and have retained the sound and shape and meaning of all that passed when Gogo, my only conceivable remembrancer, was away?

Françoise, the cook, would come into the drawing-room to discuss the dinner with my mother when Gogo was at school; and I would hear the orders given, and later I would assist at the eating of the meal (to which Gogo would invariably do ample justice), and it was just as my mother had ordered. Mystery of mysteries!

What a pleasant life it was they led together, these ghosts of a bygone time! Such a genial, smooth, easy-going, happy-go-lucky state of things—half bourgeois, half Bohemian, and yet with a well-marked simplicity, refinement, and distinction of bearing and speech that were quite aristocratic.

The servants (only three—Thérèse the housemaid, Françoise the cook, and English Sarah, who had been my nurse and was now my mother's maid) were on the kindest and most familiar terms with us, and talked to us like friends, and interested themselves in our concerns, and we in theirs; I noticed that they always wished us each good-morning and good-night—a pretty French fashion

of the Passy bourgeoisie in Louis Philippe's time (he was a bourgeois king).

Our cuisine was bourgeoise also. Peter Ibbetson's mouth watered (after his tenpenny London dinner) to see and smell the steam of "soupe à la bonne femme," "soupe aux choux," "pot au feu," "blanquette de veau," "boeuf à la mode," "cotelettes de porc à la sauce piquante," "vinaigrette de boeuf bouilli"—that endless variety of good things on which French people grow fat so young—and most excellent claret (at one franc a bottle in those happy days): its bouquet seemed to fill the room as soon as the cork was drawn!

Sometimes, such a repast ended, "le beau Pasquier," in the fulness of his heart, would suddenly let off impossible fireworks of vocalisation, ascending rockets of chromatic notes which would explode softly very high up and come down in full cadences, trills, roulades, like beautiful coloured stars; and Thérèse would exclaim, "Ah, q'c'est beau!" as if she had been present at a real pyrotechnic display; and Thérèse was quite right. I have never heard the like from any human throat, and should not have believed it possible. Only Joachim's violin can do such beautiful things so beautifully.

Or else he would tell us of wolves he had shot in Brittany, or wild-boars in Burgundy—for he was a great sportsman—or of his adventures as a *garde du corps* of Charles Dix, or of the wonderful inventions that were so soon to bring us fame and fortune; and he would loyally drink to Henri Cinq; and he was so droll and buoyant and witty that it was as good to hear him speak as to hear him sing.

But there was another and a sad side to all this strange comedy of vanished lives.

They built castles in the air, and made plans, and talked of all the wealth and happiness that would be theirs when my father's ship came home, and of all the good they would do, pathetically unconscious of the near future; which, of course, was all past history to their loving audience of one.

And then my tears would flow with the unbearable ache of love and pity combined; they would fall and dry on the waxed floors of my old home in Passy, and I would find them still wet on my pillow in Pentonville when I woke....

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Soon I discovered by practice that I was able for a second or two to be more than a mere spectator—to be an actor once more; to turn myself (Ibbetson) into my old self (Gogo), and thus be touched and caressed by those I had so loved. My mother kissed me and I felt it; just as long as I could hold my breath I could walk hand in hand with Madame Seraskier, or feel Mimsey's small weight on my back and her arms round my neck for four or five yards as I walked, before blurring the dream; and the blur would soon pass away, if it did not wake me, and I was Peter Ibbetson once more, walking and sitting amongst them, hearing them talk

and laugh, watching them at their meals, in their walks; listening to my father's songs, my mother's sweet playing, and always unseen and unheeded by them. Moreover, I soon learnt to touch things without sensibly blurring the dream. I would cull a rose, and stick it in my button-hole, and there it remained—but lo! the very rose I had just culled was still on the rose-bush also! I would pick up a stone and throw it at the wall, where it disappeared without a sound—and the very same stone still lay at my feet, however often I might pick it up and throw it!

But, wonderful to relate, if I threw something belonging to



"O Richard, ô mon roi!
L'univers t'abandonne."

LE BEAU PASQUIER DRINKS TO HIS KING.

myself, my penknife or my pipe-case, or any such *personal* dream property, it would rebound from the wall just as in real life, and fall on the ground—and remain there till I picked it up—even for days or weeks! was not it odd?

No waking joy in the world can give, can equal in intensity, these complex joys I had when asleep; waking joys seem so slight, so vague in comparison—so much escapes the senses through lack of concentration and undivided attention—the waking perceptions are so blunt.

It was a life within a life—an intenser life—in which the fresh perceptions of childhood combined with the magic of dreamland, and in which there was but one unsatisfied longing; but its name was Lion.

It was the passionate longing to meet the Duchess of Towers once more in that land of dreams.

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Thus for a time I went on, more solitary than ever, but well compensated for all my loneliness by this strange new life that had opened itself to me, and never ceasing to marvel and rejoice—when one morning I received a note from Lady Cray, who wanted some stables built at Cray, their country-seat in Hertfordshire, and begged I would go there for the day and night.

I was bound to accept this invitation, as a mere matter of business, of course; as a friend, Lady Cray seemed to have dropped me long ago, "like a 'ot potato," blissfully unconscious that it was I who had dropped her.

But she received me as a friend—an old friend. All my shyness and snobbery fell from me at the mere touch of her hand.

I had arrived at Cray early in the afternoon, and had immediately set about my work, which took several hours, so that I got to the house only just in time to dress for dinner.

When I came into the drawing-room there were several people there, and Lady Cray presented me to a young lady, the vicar's daughter, whom I was to take in to dinner.

I was very much impressed on being told by her that the company assembled in the drawing-room included no less a person than Sir Edwin Landseer. Many years ago I had copied an engraving of one of his pictures for Mimsey Scraskier. It was called "The Challenge," or "Coming Events cast their Shadows before Them." I feasted my eyes on the wondrous little man, who seemed extremely chatty and genial, and quite unembarrassed by his fame.

A guest was late, and Lord Cray, who seemed somewhat peevishly impatient for his food, exclaimed—

"Mary wouldn't be Mary if she were punctual!"

Just then Mary came in—and Mary was no less a person than the Duchess of Towers!

My knees trembled under me; but there was no time to give way to any such tender weakness. Lord Cray walked away with her; the procession filed into the dining-room, and somewhere at the end of it my young vicaress and myself.

The duchess sat a long way from me, but I met her glance for a moment, and fancied I saw again in it that glimmer of kindly recognition.

My neighbour, who was charming, asked me if I did not think the Duchess of Towers the most beautiful woman I had ever seen.

I assented with right good will, and was told that she was as good as she was beautiful, and as clever as she was good (as if I did not know it); that she would give away the very clothes off her back; that there was no trouble she would not take for others; that she did not get on well with her husband, who drank, and was altogether bad and vile; that she had a great sorrow—an only child, an idiot, to whom she was devoted, and who would some day be the Duke of Towers; that she was highly accomplished, a great

linguist, a great musician, and about the most popular woman in all English society.

Ah! who loved the Duchess of Towers better than this poor scribe, in whose soul she lived and shone like a bright particular star—like the sun; and who, without his knowing, was being rapidly drawn into the sphere of her attraction, as Lintot called it; one day to be finally absorbed, I trust, for ever!

"And who was this wonderful Duchess of Towers before she married?" I asked.

"She was a Miss Seraskier. Her father was a Hungarian, a physician, and a political reformer—a most charming person; that's



MARY IS LATE.

where she gets her manners. Her mother, whom she lost when she was quite a child, was a very beautiful Irish girl of good family, a first cousin of Lord Cray's—a Miss Desmond, who ran away with the interesting patriot. They lived somewhere near Paris. It was there that Madame Seraskier died of cholera.... What is the matter, are you ill?"

I made out that I was faint from the heat, and concealed as well as I could the flood of emotion and bewilderment that overwhelmed me.

I dared not look again at the Duchess of Towers. .

"Oh! little Mimsey dear, with your poor thin arms round my neck, and your cold, pale cheek against mine. I felt them there only last night! To have grown into such a splendid vision of female health and strength and beauty as this—with that enchanting, ever-ready laugh and smile! Why, of course, those eyes, so

lashless then, so thickly fringed to-day!—how could I have mistaken them? Ah, Mimsey, you never smiled or laughed in those days, or I should have known your eyes again! Is it possible—is it possible?"

Thus I went on to myself till the ladies left, my fair young companion expressing her kind anxiety and polite hope that I would soon be myself again.

I sat silent till it was time to join the ladies (I could not even follow the witty and brilliant anecdotes of the great painter, who held the table); and then I went up to my room. I could not face *her* again so soon after what I had heard.

The good Lord Cray came to make kind inquiries, but I soon satisfied him that my indisposition was nothing. He stayed on, however, and talked; his dinner seemed to have done him a great deal of good, and he wanted to smoke (and somebody to smoke with), which he had not been able to do in the dining-room on account of some reverend old bishop who was present. So he rolled himself a little cigarette, like a Frenchman, and puffed away to his heart's content.

He little guessed how his humble architect wished him away, until he began to talk of the Duchess of Towers—"Mary Towers," as he called her—and to tell me how "Towers" deserved to be kicked, and whipped at the cart's tail. "Why, she's the best and most beautiful woman in England, and as sharp as a needle! If it hadn't been for her, he'd have been in the bankruptcy court long ago," etc. "There's not a duchess in England that's fit to hold the candle to her, either for looks or brains, or breedin' either. Her mother (the loveliest woman that ever lived, except Mary) was a connection of mine; that's where she gets her manners!" etc.

Thus did this noble earl make music for me—sweet and bitter music.

Mary! It is a heavenly name, especially on English lips, and spelled in the English mode with the adorable *y*! Great men have had a passion for it—Byron, Shelley, Burns. But none, methinks, a greater passion than I, nor with such good cause.

And yet there must be a bad Mary now and then, here or there, and even an ugly one. Indeed, there was once a Bloody Mary who was both! It seems incredible!

Mary, indeed! Why not Hecuba? For what was I to the Duchess of Towers?

When I was alone again I went to bed, and tried to sleep on my back, with my arms up, in the hope of a true dream; but sleep would not come, and I passed a white night, as the French say. I rose early and walked about the park, and tried to interest myself in the stables till it was breakfast-time. Nobody was up, and I breakfasted alone with Lady Cray, who was as kind as she could be. I do not think she could have found me a very witty companion. And then I went back to the stables to think, and fell into a doze.

At about twelve I heard the sound of wooden balls, and found a lawn where some people were playing "croquet". It was quite a new game, and a few years later became the fashion.

I sat down under a large weeping ash close to the lawn; it was like a tent, with chairs and tables underneath.

Presently Lady Cray came there with the Duchess of Towers. I wanted to fly, but was rooted to the spot.

Lady Cray presented me, and almost immediately a servant came with a message for her, and I was left with the One Woman



AN INTRODUCTION.

in the World! My heart was in my mouth, my throat was dry, my pulse was beating in my temples.

She asked me in the most natural manner, if I played "croquet".

"Yes—no—at least sometimes—that is, I never heard of it—oh—I forget!" I groaned at my idiocy, and hid my face in my hands. She asked if I were still unwell, and I said no; and then she began to talk quite easily about anything, everything, till I felt more at my ease.

Her voice! I had never heard it well but in a dream, and it was the same—a very rich and modulated voice—low—contralto, with many varied and delightful inflexions; and she used more action in speaking than the generality of Englishwomen, thereby reminding me of Madame Seraskier. I noticed that her hands were long and

very narrow, and also her feet, and remembered that Mimsey's were like that—they were considered poor Mimsey's only beauty. I also noticed an almost imperceptible scar on her left temple, and remembered with a thrill that I had noticed it in my dream as we walked up the avenue together. In waking life I had never been near enough to her to notice a small scar, and Mimsey had no scar of the kind in the old days—of that I felt sure, for I had seen much of Mimsey lately.

I grew more accustomed to the situation, and ventured to say that I had once met her at Lady Cray's in London.

"Oh yes; I remember. Giulia Grisi sang the 'Willow Song'!" And then she crinkled up her eyes, and laughed, and blushed, and went on: "I noticed you standing in a corner, under the famous Gainsborough. You reminded me of a dear little French boy I once knew who was very kind to me when I was a little girl in France, and whose father you happen to be like. But I found that you were Mr. Ibbetson, an English architect, and, Lady Cray tells me, a very rising one."

"I was a little French boy once. I had to change my name to please a relative, and become English—that is, I was always *really* English, you know."

"Good heavens, what an extraordinary thing! What was your name, then?"

"Pasquier—Gogo Pasquier!" I groaned, and the tears came into my eyes, and I looked away. The duchess made no answer, and when I turned and looked at her she was looking at me, very pale, her lips quite white, her hands tightly clasped in her lap, and trembling all over.

I said, "You used to be little Mimsey Seraskier, and I used to carry you pickaback!"

"Oh don't! oh don't!" she said, and began to cry.

I got up and walked about under the ash-tree till she had dried her eyes. The croquet-players were intent upon their game.

I again sat down beside her; she had dried her eyes, and at length she said—

"What a dreadful thing it was about your poor father and mother, and my dear mother! Do you remember her? She died a week after you left. I went to Russia with papa—Dr. Seraskier. What a terrible break-up it all was!"

And then we gradually fell to talking quite naturally about old times, and dear dead people. She never took her eyes off mine. After a while I said—

"I went to Passy, and found everything changed and built over. It nearly drove me mad to see. I went to St. Cloud, and saw you driving with the Empress of the French. That night I had such an extraordinary dream! I dreamed I was floundering about the Rue de la Pompe, and had just got to the avenue gate, and you were there."

"Good heavens!" she whispered, and turned white again, and trembled all over; "what do you mean?"

"Yes," I said; "you came to my rescue. I was pursued by gnomes and horrors."....

She. "Good heavens! by—by two little jailers, a man and his wife, who danced and were trying to hem you in?"

It was now my turn to ejaculate "Good heavens!" We both shook and trembled together.

I said: "You gave me your hand, and all came straight at once. My old school rose in place of the jail."

She. "With a yellow omnibus? And boys going off to their *première communion*?"

I. "Yes; and there was a crowd—le Père et la Mère François, and Madame Liard, the grocer's wife, and—and Mimsey Seraskier, with her cropped head. And an organ was playing a tune I knew quite well, but cannot now recall."....

She. "Wasn't it 'Maman, les p'tits bateaux'?"

I. "Oh, of course!

" 'Maman, les p'tits bateaux
Qui vont sur l'eau,
Ont-ils des jambes? ' "

She. "That's it!

" 'Eh oui, petit bêta!
S'ils n'avaient pas
Ils n'march'raient pas! ' "

She sank back in her chair, pale and prostrate. After a while—

She. "And then I gave you good advice about how to dream true, and we got to my old house, and I tried to make you read the letters on the portico, and you read them wrong, and I laughed."

I. "Yes; I read 'Tête Noire.' Wasn't it idiotic?"

She. "And then I touched you again and you read 'Parvis Notre Dame.' "

I. "Yes! and you touched me *again*, and I read 'Parva sed Apta'—small but fit."

She. "Is *that* what it means? Why, when you were a boy, you told me *sed apta* was all one word, and was the Latin for 'Pavilion.' I believed it ever since, and thought 'Parva sed Apta' meant *petit pavillon*!"

I. "I blush for my bad Latin! After this you gave me good advice again, about not touching anything or picking flowers. I never have. And then you went away into the park—the light went out of my life, sleeping or waking. I have never been able to dream of you since. I don't suppose I shall ever meet you again after to-day!"

After this we were silent for a long time, though I hummed and hawed now and then, and tried to speak. I was sick with the conflict of my feelings. At length she said—

"Dear Mr. Ibbetson, this is all so extraordinary that I must go away and think it all over. I cannot tell you what it has been to me to meet you once more. And that double dream, common to us both! Oh, I am dazed beyond expression, and feel as if I were dreaming now—except that this all seems so unreal and impossible—so untrue! We had better part now. I don't know if I shall ever meet you again. You will be often in my thoughts, but never in my dreams again—that, at least, I can command—nor I in yours; it must not be. My poor father taught me how to dream before he died, that I might find innocent consolation



A FAREWELL.

in dreams for my waking troubles, which are many and great, as his were. If I can see that any good may come of it, I will write—but no—you must not expect a letter. I will now say good-bye and leave you. You go to-day, do you not? That is best. I think this had better be a final adieu. I cannot tell you of what interest you are to me and always have been. I thought you had died long ago. We shall often think of each other—that is inevitable—but never, never dream. That will not do.

"Dear Mr. Ibbetson, I wish you all the good that one human being can wish another. And now goodbye, and may God in heaven bless you!"

She rose, trembling and white, and her eyes wet with tears, and wrung both my hands, and left me as she had left me in the dream.

The light went out of my life, and I was once more alone—more wretchedly and miserably alone than if I had never met her.

I went back to Pentonville, and outwardly took up the thread of my monotonous existence, and ate, drank, and worked, and went about as usual, but as one in an ordinary dream. For now dreams—true dreams—had become the only reality for me.

So great, so inconceivable and unexampled a wonder had been wrought in a dream that all the conditions of life had been altered and reversed.

I and another human being had met—actually and really met—in a double dream, a dream common to us both, and clasped each other's hands! And each had spoken words to the other which neither ever would or ever could forget.

And this other human being and I had been enshrined in each other's memory for years—since childhood—and were now linked together by a tie so marvellous, an experience so unprecedented, that neither could ever well be out of the other's thoughts as long as life and sense and memory lasted.

Her very self, as we talked to each other under the ash-tree at Cray, was less vividly present to me than that other and still dearer self of hers with whom I had walked up the avenue in that balmy dream atmosphere, where we had lived and moved and had our being together for a few short moments, yet each believing the other at the time to be a mere figment of his own (and her) sleeping imagination; such stuff as dreams are made of!

And lo! it was all true—as true as the common experience of everyday life—more (ten times more), because through our keener and more exalted sense perceptions, and less divided attention, we were more conscious of each other's real inner being—linked closer together for a space—than two mortals had probably ever been since the world began.

That clasp of the hands in the dream—how infinitely more it had conveyed of one to the other than even that sad farewell clasp at Cray!

In my poor outer life I waited in vain for a letter; in vain I haunted the parks and streets—the street where she lived—in the hope of seeing her once more. The house was shut; she was away—in America, as I afterward learned—with her husband and child.

At night, in the familiar scenes I had learned so well to conjure up, I explored every nook and corner with the same yearning desire to find a trace of her. I was hardly ever away from "Parva sed Apta." There were Madame Seraskier and Mimsey and the major, and my mother and Gogo, at all times, in and out, and of course as unconscious of my solid presence as though I had never existed. And as I looked at Mimsey and her mother I wondered at my obtuseness in not recognising at the very first glance who the Duchess of Towers had been, and whose daughter. The height, the voice, the eyes, certain tricks of gait and gesture—how could I have

failed to know her again after such recent dream opportunities?

And Seraskier, towering among them all, as his daughter now towered among women. I saw that he lived again in his daughter; *his* was the smile that closed up the eyes, as *hers* did; had Mimsey ever smiled in those days, I should have known her again by this very characteristic trait.

Of this daughter of his (the Mimsey of the past years, not the duchess of to-day) I never now could have enough, and made her go through again and again all the scenes with Gogo so dear to my remembrance, and to hers. I was, in fact, the Prince Charmant, of whose unseen attendance she had been conscious in some inconceivable way. What a strange foresight! But where was the *fée Tarapatapoum*? Never there during this year of unutterable longing; she has said it; never, never again should I be in her dream, or she in mine, however constantly we might dwell in each other's thoughts.

So sped a twelvemonth after that last meeting in the flesh at Cray.

.

And now, with an unwilling heart and most reluctant pen, I must come to the great calamity of my life, which I will endeavour to tell in as few words as possible.

The reader, if he has been good enough to read without skipping, will remember the handsome Mrs. Deane, to whom I fancied I lost my heart, in Hopshire, a few years back.

I had not seen her since—had, indeed, almost forgotten her—but had heard vaguely that she had left Hopshire, and come to London, and married a wealthy man much older than herself.

Well, one day I was in Hyde Park, gazing at the people in the drive, when a spick-and-span and very brand-new open carriage went by, and in it sat Mrs. Deane (that was), all alone in her glory, and looking very sulky indeed. She recognised me and bowed, and I bowed back again, with just a moment's little flutter of the heart—an involuntary tribute to *auld-lang-syne*—and went on my way, wondering that I could ever have admired her so.

Presently, to my surprise, I was touched on the elbow. It was Mrs. Deane again—I will call her Mrs. Deane still. She had got out and followed me on foot. It was her wish that I should drive round the park with her and talk of old times. I obeyed, and for the first and last time found myself forming part of that proud and gay procession I had so often watched with curious eyes.

She seemed anxious to know whether I had ever made it up with Colonel Ibbetson, and pleased to hear that I had not, and that I probably never should, and that my feeling against him was strong and bitter and likely to last.

She appeared to hate him very much.

She inquired kindly after myself and my prospects in life, but

did not seem deeply interested in my answers—until later, when I talked of my French life, and my dear father and mother, when she listened with eager sympathy, and I was much touched. She asked if I had portraits of them; I had—most excellent miniatures; and when we parted I had promised to call upon her next afternoon and bring these miniatures with me.

She seemed a languid woman, much ennuyée, and evidently without a large circle of acquaintance. She told me I was the only person in the whole park whom she had bowed to that day. Her husband was in Hamburg, and she was going to meet him in Paris in a day or two.

I had not so many friends but what I felt rather glad than otherwise to have met her, and willingly called as I had promised, with the portraits.

She lived in a large, new house, magnificently upholstered, near the Marble Arch. She was quite alone when I called, and asked me immediately if I had brought miniatures; and looked at them quite eagerly, and then at me, and exclaimed—

“Good heavens, you are your father’s very image!”

Indeed, I had always been considered so.

Both his eyebrows and mine, especially, met in a singular and characteristic fashion at the bridge of the nose, and she seemed much struck by this. He was represented in the uniform of Charles X.’s *gardes du corps*, in which he had served for two years, and had acquired the nickname of “le beau Pasquier.” Mrs. Deane seemed never to tire of gazing at it, and remarked that my father “must have been the very ideal of a young girl’s dream” (an indirect compliment which made me blush after what she had just said of the likeness between us. I almost began to wonder whether she was going to try and make a fool of me again, as she had so successfully done a few years ago).

Then she became interested again in my early life and recollections, and wanted to know whether my parents were fond of each other. They were a most devoted and lover-like pair, and had loved each other at first sight and until death, and I told her so and so on until I became quite excited, and imagined she must know of some good fortune to which I was entitled, and had been kept out of by the machinations of a wicked uncle.

For I had long discovered in my dreams that he had been my father’s bitterest enemy and the main cause of his financial ruin, by selfish, heartless, and dishonest deeds too complicated to explain here—a regular Shylock.

I had found this out by listening (in my dreams) to long conversations between my father and mother in the old drawing-room at Passy, while Gogo was absorbed in his book; and every word that had passed through Gogo’s inattentive ears into his otherwise preoccupied little brain had been recorded there as in a phonograph, and was now repeated over and over again for Peter Ibbetson, as he sat unnoticed among them.

I asked her, jokingly, if she had discovered that I was the rightful heir to Ibbetson Hall by any chance.

She replied that nothing would give her greater pleasure, but there was no such good fortune in store for either her or me! that she had discovered long ago that Colonel Ibbetson was the greatest blackguard unhung, and nothing new she might discover could make him worse.

I then remembered how he would often speak of her, even to me, and hint and insinuate things which were no doubt untrue, and which I disbelieved. Not that the question of their truth or untruth made him any the less despicable and vile for telling.

She asked me if he had ever spoken of her to me, and after much persuasion and cunning cross-examination I told her as much of the truth as I dared, and she became a tigress. She assured me that he had managed so to injure and compromise her in Hopshire that she and her mother had to leave, and she swore to me most solemnly (and I thoroughly believe she spoke the truth) that there had never been any relation between them that she could not have owned to before the whole world.

She had wished to marry him, it is true, for his wealth and position, for both she and her mother were very poor, and often hard put to it to make both ends meet and keep up a decent appearance before the world; and he had singled her out and paid her marked attention from the first, and given her every reason to believe that his attentions were serious and honourable.

At this juncture her mother came in, Mrs. Glyn, and we renewed our old acquaintance. She had quite forgiven me my schoolboy admiration for her daughter; all her power of hating, like her daughter's, had concentrated itself on Ibbetson; and as I listened to the long story of their wrongs and his infamy, I grew to hate him worse than ever, and was ready to be their champion on the spot, and to take up their quarrel there and then.

But this would not do, it appeared, for their name must nevermore be in any way mixed up with his.

Then suddenly Mrs. Glyn asked me if I knew when he went to India.

I could satisfy her, for I knew that it was just after my parents' marriage, nearly a year before my birth; upon which she gave the exact date of his departure with his regiment, and the name of the transport, and everything; and also, to my surprise, the date of my parents' marriage at Marylebone Church, and of my baptism there fifteen months later—just fourteen weeks after my birth in Passy. I was growing quite bewildered with all this knowledge of my affairs, and wondered more and more.

We sat silent for a while, the two women looking at each other and at me and at the miniatures. It was getting gruesome. What could it all mean?

Presently Mrs. Glyn, at a nod from her daughter, addressed me thus—

"Mr. Ibbetson, your uncle, as you call him, though he is not your uncle, is a very terrible villain, and has done you and your parents a very foul wrong. Before I tell you what it is (and I think you ought to know) you must give me your word of honour that you will do or say nothing that will get our name publicly mixed up in any way with Colonel Ibbetson's. The injury to my daughter now she is happily married to an excellent man, would be irreparable."

With a beating heart I solemnly gave the required assurance.

"Then, Mr. Ibbetson, it is right that you should know that Colonel Ibbetson, when he was paying his infamous addresses to my daughter, gave her unmistakably to understand that you were his natural son, by his cousin, Miss Catherine Biddulph afterward Madame Pasquier de la Marière!"

"Oh, oh, oh!" I cried, "surely you must be mistaken—he knew it was impossible—he had been refused by my mother three times—he went to India nearly a year before I was born—he——"

Then Mrs. Deane said, producing an old letter from her pocket—

"Do you know his handwriting and his crest? Do you happen to recollect once bringing me a note from him at Ibbetson Hall? Here it is," and she handed it to me. It was unmistakably his, and I remembered it at once, and this is what it said—

"For Heaven's sake, dear friend, don't breathe a word to any living soul of what you were clever enough to guess last night. There is a likeness, of course.

'Poor Antinoüs! He is quite ignorant of the true relationship, which has caused me many a pang of shame and remorse....

"*Que voulez-vous? Elle était ravissante!*.... We were cousins, much thrown together; 'both were so young, and one so beautiful!'.... I was but a penniless cornet in those days—hardly more than a boy. Happily an unsuspecting Frenchman of good family was there who had loved her long, and she married him. *'Il était temps!'*....

"Can you forgive me this *'entraînement de jeunesse'*? I have repented in sackcloth and ashes, and made what reparation I could by adopting and giving my name to one who is a perpetual reminder to me of a moment's infatuation. He little knows, poor boy, and never will, I hope. *'Il n'a plus que moi au monde!'*

"Burn this as soon as you have read it, and never let the subject be mentioned between us again.

"R. (*'Qui sait aimer.'*)"

Here was a thunderbolt out of the blue!

I sat stunned and saw scarlet, and felt as if I should see scarlet for ever.

After a long silence, during which I could feel my pulse beat to bursting-point in my temples, Mrs. Glyn said—

"Now, Mr. Ibbetson, I hope you will do nothing rash—nothing that can bring my daughter's name into any quarrel between yourself and your uncle. For the sake of your mother's good name, you will be prudent, I know. If he could speak like this of his cousin, with whom he had been in love when he was young, what lies would he not tell of my poor daughter? He *has*—terrible lies! Oh, what we have suffered! When he wrote that letter I believe he really meant to marry her. He had the greatest trust in her, or he would never have committed himself so foolishly."

"Does he know of this letter's existing?" I asked.

"No. When he and my daughter quarrelled she sent him back



THE FATAL LETTER.

his letters—all but this one, which she told him she had burned immediately after reading it, as he had told her to do."

"May I keep it?"

"Yes. I know you may be trusted, and my daughter's name has been removed from the outside, as you see. No one but ourselves has ever seen it, nor have we mentioned to a soul what it contains, as we never believed it for a moment. Two or three years ago we had the curiosity to find out when and where your parents had married, and when you were born, and when he went to India. It was no surprise to us at all. We then tried to find *you*, but soon gave it up, and thought it better to leave matters alone. Then we heard he was in mischief again—just the same sort of mischief; and then my daughter saw you in the park, and we concluded you ought to know."

Such was the gist of that memorable conversation, which I have condensed as much as I could.

When I left these two ladies I walked twice rapidly round the park. I saw scarlet often during that walk. Perhaps I looked scarlet. I remember people staring at me.

Then I went straight to Lintot's, with the impulse to tell him my trouble and ask his advice.

He was away from home, and I waited in his smoking-room for a while, reading the letter over and over again.

Then I decided not to tell him, and left the house, taking with me as I did so (but without any definite purpose) a heavy loaded stick, a most formidable weapon, even in the hands of a boy, and which I myself had given to Lintot on his last birthday. 'Λνάγκη!

Then I went to my usual eating-house near the circus and dined. To the surprise of the waiting-maid, I drank a quart of bitter ale and two glasses of sherry. It was my custom to drink water. She plied me with questions as to whether I was ill or in trouble. I answered her no, and at last begged she would leave me alone.

Ibbetson lived in St. James's Street. I went there. He was out. It was nine o'clock, and his servant seemed uncertain when he would return. I came back at ten. He was not yet home, and the servant, after thinking a while, and looking up and down the street, and finding my appearance decent and by no means dangerous, asked me to go upstairs and wait, as I told him it was a matter of great importance.

So I went and sat in my uncle's drawing-room and waited.

The servant came with me and lit the candles, and remarked on the weather, and handed me the *Saturday Review* and *Punch*. I must have looked quite natural—as I tried to look—and he left me.

I saw a Malay creese on the mantelpiece and hid it behind a picture-frame. I locked a door leading to another drawing-room where there was a grand piano, and above it a trophy of swords, daggers, battle-axes, etc., and put the key in my pocket.

The key of the room where I waited was inside the door.

All this time I had a vague idea of possible violence on his part, but no idea of killing him. I felt far too strong for that. Indeed, I had a feeling of quiet, irresistible strength—the result of suppressed excitement.

I sat down and meditated all I would say. I had settled it over and over again, and read and re-read the fatal letter.

The servant came up with glasses and soda-water. I trembled lest he should observe that the door to the other room was locked, but he did not. He opened the window and looked up and down the street. Presently he said, "Here's the colonel at last, sir," and went down to open the door.

I heard him come in and speak to his servant. Then he came straight up, humming "*la donna e mobile*", and walked in with just the jaunty, airy manner I remembered. He was in evening dress, and

very little changed. He seemed much surprised to see me, and turned very white.

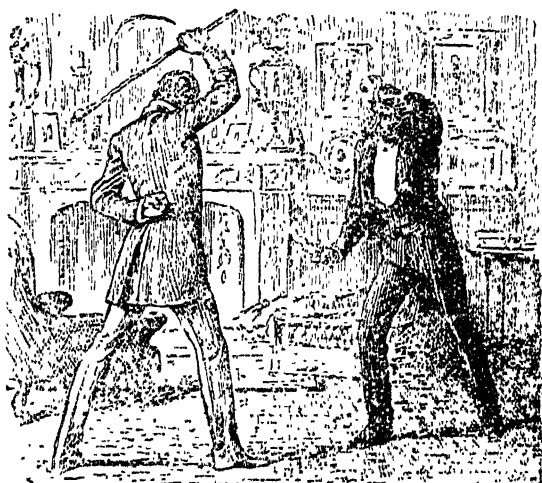
"Well, my Apollo of the T square, *pourquoi cet honneur?* Have you come, like a dutiful nephew, to humble yourself and beg for forgiveness?"

I forgot all I meant to say (indeed, nothing happened as I had meant), but rose and said, "I have come to have a talk with you," as quietly as I could, though with a thick voice.

He seemed uneasy, and went toward the door.

I got there before him, and closed it, and locked it, and put the key in my pocket.

He darted to the other door and found it locked.



BASTARD! PARRICIDE!

Then he went to the mantelpiece and looked for the creese, and not finding it, he turned round with his back to the fireplace and his arms akimbo, and tried to look very contemptuous and determined. His chin was quite white under his dyed mustache—like wax—and his eyes blinked nervously.

I walked up to him and said—

"You told Mrs. Deane that I was your natural son."

"It's a lie! Who told you so?"

"She did—this afternoon."

"It's a lie—a spiteful invention of a cast-off mistress!"

"She never was your mistress!"

"You fool! I suppose she told you that too. Leave the room, you pitiful green jackass, or I'll have you turned out," and he rang the bell.

"Do you know your own handwriting?" I said, and handed him the letter.

He read a line or two and gasped out that it was a forgery, and rang the bell again, and looked again behind the clock for his creese. Then he lit the letter at a candle and threw it in the fireplace, where it blazed out.

I made no attempt to prevent him.

The servant tried to open the door, and Ibbetson went to the window and called out for the police. I rushed to the picture where I had hidden the creese, and threw it on the table. Then I swung him away from the window by his coat-tails, and told him to defend himself, pointing to the creese.

He seized it, and stood on the defensive; the servant had apparently run downstairs for assistance.

"Now, then," I said, "down on your knees, you infamous cur, and confess; it's your only chance."

"Confess what, you fool?"

"That you're a coward and a liar; that you wrote that letter; that Mrs. Deane was no more your mistress than my mother was!"

There was a sound of people running upstairs. He listened a moment and hissed out—

"They *both* were, you idiot! How can I tell for certain whether you are my son or not? It all comes to the same. Of course I wrote the letter. Come on, you cowardly assassin, you bastard parricide!" ...and he advanced on me with his creese low down in his right hand, the point upward, and made a thrust, shrieking out, "Break open the door! quick!" They did; but too late!

I saw crimson!

He missed me, and I brought down my stick on his left arm, which he held over his head, and then on his head, and he fell crying—

"O my God! O Christ!"

I struck him again on his head as he was falling, and once again when he was on the ground. It seemed to crash right in.

That is why and how I killed Uncle Ibbetson.

PART FIFTH

Grouille, grève, grève, grouille,
File, file, ma quenouille!
File sa corde au bourreau
Qui siffle dans le préau....

So sang the old hag in *Notre Dame de Paris*!

So sang to me night and day, for many nights and days, the thin small voice that always went piping inside me, now to one tune, now to another, but always the same words—that terrible refrain that used to haunt me so when I was a schoolboy at Bluefriars!

.

Oh to be a schoolboy again in a long gray coat and ridiculous pink stockings—innocent and free—with Esmeralda for my only love, and Athos and Porthos and D'Artagnan for my bosom friends, and no worse tribulation than to be told on a Saturday afternoon that the third volume was in hand—*volume trois est en lecture*!

.

Sometimes, I remember, I could hardly sleep on a Sunday night, for pity of the poor wretch who was to be hanged close by on the Monday morning, and it has come to that with *me*!

.

O Mary, Mary, Duchess of Towers, sweet friend of my childhood, and love of my life, what must you think of me now?

.

How blessed are the faithful! How good it must be to trust in God and heaven, and the forgiveness of sin, and be as a little child in all but innocence! A whole career of crime wiped out in a moment by just one cheap little mental act of faith at the eleventh hour, in the extreme terror of well-merited dissolution; and all the evil one has worked through life (that goes on breeding evil for ages to come) taken off one's shoulders like a filthy garment, and just cast aside, anywhere, anyhow, for the infecting of others—who do not count.

.

What matter if it be a fool's paradise? Paradise is paradise, for whoever owns it!

.

They say a Sicilian drum-major, during the French occupation of Palermo, was sentenced to be shot. He was a well-known coward, and it was feared he would disgrace his country at the last moment in the presence of the French soldiers, who had a way of being shot

with a good grace and a light heart: they had grown accustomed to it.

For the honour of Sicily his confessor told him, in the strictest confidence, that his sentence was a mock one, and that he would be fired at with blank cartridges.

It was a pious fraud. All but two of the twelve cartridges had bullets, and he fell, riddled through and through. No Frenchman ever died with a lighter heart, a better grace. He was superb, and the national honour was saved.

Thrice happy Sicilian drum-major, if the story be true! That trust in blank cartridges was his paradise.

Oh it is uphill work to be a stoic when the moment comes and the tug! But when the tug lasts for more than a moment—days and nights, days and nights! O happy Sicilian drum-major!

Pray? Yes, I will pray night and morning, and all day long, to whatever there is left of inherited strength and courage in that luckless, misbegotten waif, Peter Ibbetson; that it may bear him up a little while yet; that he may not disgrace himself in the dock or on the gallows.

Repent? Yes, of many things. But of the thing for which I am here? Never!

It is a ghastly thing to be judge and jury and executioner all in one, and for a private and personal wrong—to condemn, and strike, and kill.

Pity comes after—when it is too late, fortunately—the wretched weakness of pity! Pooh! no Calcraft will ever pity *me*, and I do not want him to.

He had his long, snaky knife against my stick; he, too, was a big strong man, well skilled in self-defence! Down he went, and I struck him again and again. "O my God! O Christ!" he shrieked....

It will ring in my heart and my ears till I die—till I die!

There was no time to lose—no time to think for the best. It is all for the best as it is. What might he not have said if he had lived!

Thank Heaven, pity is not remorse or shame; and what crime could well be worse than his? To rob one's dearly beloved dead of their fair fame!

He might have been mad, perhaps, and have grown in time to

believe the lies he told himself. Such things have been. But such a madman should no more be suffered to live than a mad dog. The only way to kill the lie was to kill the liar—that is, if one *can* ever kill a lie!

Poor worm! after all, he could not help it, I suppose! he was *built* like that! and *I* was built to kill him for it, and be hanged! 'Αrdyρη!

What an exit for "Gogo—gentil petit Gogo!"

Just opposite that wall, on the other side, was once a small tripe and trotter shop, kept by a most lovely daughter of the people, so fair and good in my eyes that I would have asked her to be my wife. What would she think of me now? That I should have dared to aspire! What a King Cophetua!

What does everybody think? I can never breathe the real cause to a soul. Only two women know the truth, and they will take good care not to tell. Thank Heaven for that!

What matters what anybody thinks? "It will be all the same a hundred years hence." That is the most sensible proverb ever invented.

But meanwhile!

The judge puts on the black cap, and it is all for you! Every eye is fixed on you, so big and young and strong and full of life! Ugh!

They pinion you, and you have to walk and be a man, and the chaplain exhorts and prays and tries to comfort. Then a sea of faces; people opposite, who have been eating and drinking and making merry, waiting for you! A cap is pulled over your eyes—O horror! horror! horror!

"Heureux tambour-major de Sicile!"

"Il faut laver son linge sale en famille, et c'est ce que j'ai fait. Mais ça va me coûter cher!"

Would I do it all over again? Oh, let me hope, yes!

Ah, he died too quick; I dealt him those four blows in less than

as many seconds. It was five minutes, perhaps—or, at the most, ten—from the moment he came into the room to that when I finished him and was caught red-handed. And I—what a long agony!

Oh that I might once more dream a “true dream,” and see my dear people once more! But it seems that I have lost the power of dreaming true since that fatal night. I try and try, but it will not come. My dreams are dreadful; and, oh, the *waking*!

After all, my life hitherto, but for a few happy years of childhood, has not been worth living; it is most unlikely that it ever would have been, had I lived to a hundred! O Mary! Mary!

And penal servitude! Better any death than that. It is good that my secret must die with me—that there will be no extenuating circumstances, no recommendation to mercy, no commutation of the swift penalty of death.

“File, file....
File sa corde au bourreau!”

By such monotonous thoughts, and others as dreary and hopeless, recurring again and again in the same dull round, I beguiled the terrible time that intervened between Ibbetson’s death and my trial at the Old Bailey.

It all seems very trivial and unimportant now—not worth recording—even hard to remember.

But at the time my misery was so great, my terror of the gallows so poignant, that each day I thought I must die of sheer grief before another twenty-four hours could possibly pass over me.

The intolerable strain would grow more and more severe till a climax of tension was reached, and a hysterical burst of tears would relieve me for a while, and I would feel reconciled to my fate, and able to face death like a man.... Then the anguish would gradually steal over me again, and the uncontrollable weakness of the flesh....

And each of these two opposite moods, while it lasted, made the other seem impossible, and as if it never could come back again; yet back it came with the regularity of a tide—the most harrowing seesaw that ever was.

I had always been unstable like that; but whereas I had hitherto oscillated between high elation and despondency, it was now from a dumb, resigned despair to the wildest agony and terror.

I sought in vain for the only comfort it was in me to seek; but when, overdone with suffering, I fell asleep at last, I could no longer dream true; I could dream only as other wretches dream.

I always dreamed those two little dancing, deformed jailers, man and wife, had got me at last; and that I shrieked aloud for my

beloved duchess to succour me, as they ran me in, each butting at me sideways, and showing their toothless gums in a black smile, and poisoning me with their hot sour breath! The gate was there, and the avenue, all distorted and quite unlike; and, opposite, a jail; but no powerful Duchess of Towers to wave the horror away.

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It will be remembered by some, perhaps, how short was my trial.

The plea of "not guilty" was entered for me. The defence set up was insanity, based on the absence of any adequate motive. This defence was soon disposed of by the prosecution; witnesses to my sanity were not wanting, and motives enough were found in my past relations with Colonel Ibbetson to "make me—a violent, morose, and vindictive-natured man—imbrue my hands in the gore of my relative and benefactor—a man old enough to be my father—who, indeed, might have been my father, for the love he had bestowed upon me, with his honoured name, when I was left a penniless, foreign orphan on his hands."

Here I laughed loud and long, and made a most painful impression, as is duly recorded in the reports of the trial.

The jury found me guilty quite early in the afternoon of the second day, without leaving the box; and I "preserving to the last the callous and unmoved demeanour I had borne all through the trial," was duly sentenced to death without any hope of mercy, but with an expression of regret on the part of the judge—a famous hanging judge—that a man of my education and promise should be brought by his own evil nature and uncontrollable passions to so deplorable an end.

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Now whether the worst of certainties is better than suspense—whether my nerves of pain had been so exercised during the period preceding my trial that I had really become callous, as they say a man's back does after a certain number of strokes from the "cat"—certain it was that I knew the worst, and acquiesced in it with a surprised sense of actual relief, and found it in me to feel it not unbearable.

Such, at least, was my mood that night. I made the most of it. It was almost happiness by comparison with what I had gone through. I remember eating with a heartiness that surprised me. I could have gone straight from my dinner to the gallows, and died with a light heart and a good grace—like a Sicilian drum-major.

I resolved to write the whole true story to the Duchess of Towers, with an avowal of my long and hopeless adoration for her, and the expression of a hope that she would try to think of me only as her old playfellow, and as she had known me before this terrible disaster. And thinking of the letter I would write till very late, I fell asleep.

in my cell, with two warders to watch over me; and then— Another phase of my inner life began.

Without effort, without let or hindrance of any kind, I was at the avenue gate.

The pink and white may, the lilacs and laburnums were in full bloom, the sun made golden paths everywhere. The warm air was full of fragrance, and alive with all the buzz and chirp of early summer.

I was half crying with joy to reach the land of my true dreams again, to feel at home once more—*chez moi! chez moi!*



CINQ SOUS, CINQ SOUS, POUR MONTER NOTRE MÉNAGE.

La Mère François sat peeling potatoes at the door of her *loge*; she was singing a little song about *cinq sous, cinq sous, pour monter notre ménage*. I had forgotten it, but it all came back now.

The facetious postman, Yverdon, went in at the gate of my old garden; the bell rang as he pushed it, and I followed him.

Under the apple-tree, which was putting forth shoots of blossom in profusion, sat my mother and father and Monsieur le Major. My mother took the letter from the postman's hand as he said, "Pour vous? Oh yes, Madame Pasquier, God sev ze Kveen!" and paid the postage. It was from Colonel Ibbetson, then in Ireland, and not yet a colonel.

Médor lay snoring on the grass, and Gogo and Mimsey were looking at the pictures in the *musée des familles*.

In a garden chair lolled Dr. Seraskier, apparently asleep, with his long porcelain pipe across his knees.

Madame Seraskier, in a yellow nankeen gown with gigot sleeves, was cutting curl-papers out of the *Constitutionnel*.

I gazed on them all with unutterable tenderness. I was gazing on them perhaps for the last time.

I called out to them by name.

"Oh speak to me, beloved shades! O my father! O mother, I want you so desperately! Come out of the past for a few seconds, and give me some words of comfort! I'm in such woful plight! If you could only *know*...."

But they could neither hear nor see me.

Then suddenly another figure stepped forth from behind the apple-tree — no old-fashioned, unsubstantial shadow of bygone days that one can only see and hear, and that cannot hear and see one back again; but one in all the splendid fulness of life, a pillar of help and strength—Mary, Duchess of Towers!

I fell on my knees as she came to me with both hands extended.

"Oh, Mr. Ibbetson, I have been seeking and waiting for you here night after night! I have been frantic! If you hadn't come at last, I must have thrown everything to the winds, and gone to see you in Newgate, waking and before the world, to have a talk with you—an *abboccamento*. I suppose you couldn't sleep, or were unable to dream."

I could not answer at first. I could only cover her hands with kisses, as I felt her warm life-current mixing with mine—a rapture!

And then I said—

"I swear to you by all I hold most sacred—by *my* mother's memory and *yours*—by yourself—that I never meant to take Ibbetson's life, or even strike him; the miserable blow was dealt...."

"As if you need tell me that! As if I didn't know you of old, my poor friend, kindest and gentlest of men! Why, I am holding your hands, and see into the very depths of your heart!"

(I put down all she said as she said it. Of course I am not, and never have been, what her old affectionate regard made me seem in her eyes, any more than I am the bloodthirsty monster I passed for. Woman-like, she was the slave of her predilections.)

"And now, Mr. Ibbetson," she went on, "let me first of all tell you, for a certainty, that the sentence will be commuted. I saw the Home Secretary three or four hours ago. The real cause of your deplorable quarrel with your uncle is an open secret. His character is well known. A Mrs. Gregory (whom you knew in Hopshire as Mrs. Deane) has been with the Home Secretary this afternoon. Your chivalrous reticence at the trial...."

"Oh," I interrupted, "I don't care to live any longer! Now that I have met you once more, and that you have forgiven me and think well of me in spite of everything, I am ready to die. There has never been anybody but you in the world for *me*—never a ghost of a woman, never even a friend since my mother died and yours. Between that time and the night I first saw you at Lady Cray's concert, I can scarcely be said to have lived at all. I fed on scraps of remembrance. You see I have no talent for making new friends, but oh, such a genius for fidelity to old ones! I was waiting for Mimsy to come back again, I suppose, the one survivor to me of that

sweet time, and when she came at last I was too stupid to recognise her. She suddenly blazed and dazzled into my poor life a meteor, and filled it with a maddening love and pain. I don't know which of the two has been the sweetest; both have been my life. You cannot realise what it has been. Trust me, I have lived my fill. I am ready and willing to die. It is the only perfect consummation I can think of. Nothing can ever equal this moment—nothing on earth or in heaven. And if I were free to-morrow, life would not be worth having without you. I would not take it as a gift."



BELOVED SHADES.

She sat down by me on the grass with her hands clasped across her knees, close to the unconscious shadows of our kith and kin, within hearing of their happy talk and laughter.

Suddenly we both heard Mimsey say to Gogo—

"O, ils sont joliment bien ensemble, le Prince Charmant et la fée Tarapatapoum!"

We looked at each other and actually laughed aloud. The duchess said—

"Was there ever, since the world began, such a *mise en scène*, and for such a meeting, Mr. Ibbetson? Think of it! Conceive it! I arranged it all. I chose a day when they were all together. As they would say in America, I am the boss of this particular dream."

And she laughed again, through her tears, that enchanting ripple of a laugh that closed her eyes and made her so irresistible.

"Was there ever," said I—"ever since the world began, such ecstasy as I feel now? After this what can there be for me but death—well earned and well paid for? Welcome and lovely Death!"

"You have not yet thought, Mr. Ibbetson—you have not realised what life may have in store for you if—if all you have said about your affection for me is true. Oh, it is too terrible for me to think of, I know, that you, scarcely more than a boy, should have to spend the rest of your life in miserable confinement and unprofitable monotonous toil. But there is *another* side to that picture.

"Now listen to your old friend's story—poor little Mimsey's confession. I will make it as short as I can.

"Do you remember when you first saw me, a sickly, plain, sad little girl, at the avenue gate, twenty years ago?"

"Le Père François was killing a fowl—cutting its throat with a clasp-knife—and the poor thing struggled frantically in his grasp as its blood flowed into the gutter. A group of boys were looking on in great glee, and all the while Père François was gossiping with M. le Curé, who didn't seem to mind in the least. I was fainting with pity and horror. Suddenly you came out of the school opposite with Alfred and Charlie Plunket, and saw it all, and in a fit of noble rage you called Père François a 'sacred pig of assassin'—which, as you know, is very rude in French—and struck him as near his face as you could reach.

"Have you forgotten that? Ah I haven't! It was not an effectual deed, perhaps, and certainly came too late to save the fowl. Besides, Père François struck you back again, and left some of the fowl's blood on your cheek. It was a baptism! You became on the spot my hero—my angel of light. Look at Gogo over there. Is he beautiful enough? That was you, Mr. Ibbetson.

"M. le Curé said something about '*ces Anglais*' who go mad if a man whips his horse, and yet pay people to box each other to death. Don't you really remember? Oh, the recollection to me!

"And that little language we invented and used to talk so fluently! Don't you *rappel* it to yourself? '*Ne le récollectes tu pas?*' as we would have said in those days, for it used to be *thee* and *thou* with us then.

"Well, at all events, you must remember how for five happy years we were so often together; how you drew for me, read to me, played with me; took my part in everything, right or wrong; carried me pickaback when I was tired. Your drawings—I have them all. And oh! you were so funny sometimes! How you used to make mamma laugh, and M. le Major! Just look at Gogo again. Have you forgotten what he is doing now? I haven't.... He has just changed the *musée des familles* for the *Penny Magazine*, and is explaining Hogarth's pictures of the 'Idle and Industrious Apprentices' to Mimsey, and they are both agreed that the idle one is much the less objectionable of the two.

"Mimsey looks passive enough, with her thumb in her mouth, doesn't she? Her little heart is so full of gratitude and love for Gogo that she can't speak. She can only suck her thumb. Poor, sick, ungainly child! She would like to be Gogo's slave—she would die for Gogo. And her mother adores Gogo too; she is almost jealous of dear Madame Pasquier for having so sweet a son. In just one minute from now, when she has cut that last curl-paper, poor long-dead mamma will call Gogo to her and give him a good 'Irish hug,' and make him happy for a week. Wait a minute and see. *There!* What did I tell you?"

"Well, all that came to an end. Madame Pasquier went away and never came back, and so did Gogo. Monsieur and Madame Pasquier were dead, and dear mamma died in a week from the cholera. Poor heart-broken Mimsey was taken away to St. Petersburg, Warsaw, Leipsic, Venice, all over Europe, by her father, as heart-broken as herself.

"It was her wish and her father's that she should become a pianist by profession, and she studied hard for many years in almost every capital, and under almost every master in Europe, and she gave promise of success.

"And so, wandering from one place to another, she became a young woman—a greatly petted and spoiled and made-much-of young woman, Mr. Ibbetson, although she says it who shouldn't; and had many suitors of all kinds and countries.

"But the heroic and angelic Gogo, with his lovely straight nose, and his hair *aux enfants d'Edouard*, and his dear little white silk chimney-pot hat and Eton jacket, was always enshrined in her memory, in her inmost heart, as the incarnation of all that was beautiful and brave and good. But alas! what had become of this Gogo in the meantime? Ah, he was never even heard of—he was dead!

"Well, this long-legged, tender-hearted, grown-up young Mimsey of nineteen was attracted by a very witty and accomplished English attaché at Vienna—a Mr. Harcourt, who seemed deeply in love with her, and wished her to be his wife.

"He was not rich, but Dr. Seraskier liked and trusted him so much that he dispossessed himself of almost everything he had to enable this young couple to marry—and they did. And truth compels me to admit that for a year they were very happy and contented with fate and each other.

"Then a great misfortune befell them both. In a most unexpected manner, through four or five consecutive deaths in Mr. Harcourt's family, he became, first, Lord Harcourt, and then the Duke of Towers. And since then, Mr. Ibbetson, I have not had an hour's peace or happiness.

"In the first place a son was born to me—a cripple, poor dear! and deformed from his birth; and as he grew older it soon became evident that he was also born without a mind.

"Then my unfortunate husband changed completely; he drank and gambled and worse, till we came to live together as strangers, and only spoke to each other in public and before the world...."

"Ah," I said, "you were still a great lady—an English duchess!"

I could not endure the thought of that happy twelve-month with that bestial duke! I, sober, chaste, and clean—of all but blood, alas!—and a condemned convict!

"Oh, Mr. Ibbetson, you must make no mistake about *me*! I was never intended by nature for a duchess—especially an English one. Not but what, if dukes and duchesses are necessary, the English are the best—and, of course, by duke and duchesses I mean all that upper-ten-thousand in England which calls itself 'society'—as if there were no other worth speaking of. Some of them are almost angelic, but they are not for outsiders like me. Perpetual hunting and shooting and fishing and horse-racing—eating, drinking, and killing, and making love—eternal court gossip and tittle-tattle—the Prince—the Queen—whom and what the Queen likes, whom and what she doesn't!—tame English party politics—the Church—a Church that doesn't know its own mind, in spite of its deans, bishops, archbishops, and their wives and daughters—and all their silly, solemn sense of social rank and dignity! Endless smalltalk, dinners, and drums, and no society from years' end to year's end but each other! Ah, one must be caught young, and put in harness early, to lead such an existence as that and be content! And I had met and known *such* men and women with my father! They *were* something to know!

"There is another society in London and elsewhere—a freemasonry of intellect and culture and hard work—*la haute bohème du talent*—men and women whose names are or ought to be household words all over the world; many of them are good friends of mine, both here and abroad; and that society, which was good enough for my father and mother, is quite good enough for me.

"I am a republican, Mr. Ibbetson—a cosmopolite—a born Bohemian!

" 'Mon grand-père était rossignol;
Ma grand-mère était hirondelle!'

"Look at my dear people there—look at your dear people! What waifs and strays, until their ship comes home, which we know it never will! Our fathers for ever racking their five wits in the pursuit of an idea! Our mothers for ever racking theirs to save money and make both ends meet!... Why, Mr. Ibbetson, you are nearer to the *rossignol* than I am. Do you remember your father's voice? Shall I ever forget it! He sang to me only last night, and in the midst of my harrowing anxiety about you I was beguiled into listening outside the window. He sang Rossini's '*Cujus Animam*.' He was the nightingale; that was his vocation, if he could but have known it. And you are my brother Bohemian; that is *yours*!... Ah, my vocation! It was to be the wife of some busy brain-worker

—man of science—conspirator—writer—artist—architect, if you like; to fence him round and shield him from all the little worries and troubles and petty vexations of life. I am a woman of business *par excellence*—a manager, and all that. He would have had a warm, well-ordered little nest to come home to after hunting his idea!

"Well, I thought myself the most unhappy woman alive, and wrapped myself up in my affection for my much-afflicted little son; and as I held him to my breast, and vainly tried to warm and mesmerise him into feeling and intelligence, Gogo came back into my heart, and I was for ever thinking, 'oh, if I had a son like Gogo, what a happy woman I should be!' and pitied Madame Pasquier for dying and leaving him so soon, for I had just begun to dream true, and had seen Gogo and his sweet mother once again.

"And then one night—one never-to-be-forgotten night—I went to Lady Cray's concert, and saw you standing in a corner by yourself; and I thought, with a leap of my heart, 'Why, that must be Gogo, grown dark, and with a beard and mustache like a Frenchman!' But alas, I found that you were only a Mr. Ibbetson, Lady Cray's architect, whom she had asked to her house because he was 'quite the handsomest young man she had ever seen!'

"You needn't laugh. You looked very nice, I assure you!

"Well, Mr. Ibbetson, although you were not Gogo, you became suddenly so interesting to me that I never forgot you—you were never quite out of my mind. I wanted to counsel and advise you, and take you by the hand, and be an elder sister to you, for I felt myself already older than you in the world and its ways. I wanted to be twenty years older still, and to have you for my son. I don't know *what* I wanted! You seemed so lonely, and fresh, and unspotted from the world, amongst all those smart worldlings, and yet so big and strong and square and invincible—oh, so strong! And then you looked at me with such sincere and sweet and chivalrous admiration and sympathy—there, I cannot speak of it—and then you were so like what Gogo might have become! Oh, you made as warm and devoted a friend of me at first sight as any one might desire!

"And at the same time you made me feel so selfconscious and shy that I dared not ask to be introduced to you—I, who scarcely know what shyness is.

"Dear Giulia Grisi sang '*Assisa al Piè d' un' Salice*,' and that tune has always been associated in my mind with your image ever since, and always will be. Your dear mother used to play it on the harp. Do you remember?

"Then came that extraordinary dream, which you remember as well as I do: *wasn't* it a wonder? You see, my dear father had learned a strange secret of the brain—how in sleep to recall past things and people and places as they had once been seen or known by him—even unremembered things. He called it 'dreaming true,'

and by long practice, he told me, he had brought the art of doing this to perfection. It was the one consolation of his troubled life to go over and over again in sleep all his happy youth and childhood, and the few short years he had spent with his beloved young wife. And before he died, when he saw I had become so unhappy that life seemed to have no longer any possible hope or pleasure for me, he taught me his very simple secret.

"Thus have I revisited in sleep every place I have ever lived in,



ECHOS DU TEMPS PASSÉ.

and especially this, the beloved spot where I first as a little girl knew you!

"That night when we met again in our common dream I was looking at the boys from Saindou's school going to their *première communion*, and thinking very much of you, as I had seen you, when awake, a few hours before, looking out of the window at the 'Tête Noire'; when you suddenly appeared in great seeming trouble and walking like a tipsy man; and my vision was disturbed by the shadow of a prison—alas! alas!—and two little jailers jingling their keys and trying to hem you in.

"My emotion at seeing you again so soon was so great that I nearly woke. But I rescued you from your imaginary terrors and held you by the hand. You remember all the rest.

"I could not understand why you should be in my dream, as I had almost always dreamed true—that is, about things that *had* been in my life—not about things that *might* be; nor could I account

for the solidity of your hand, nor understand why you didn't fade away when I took it, and blur the dream. It was a most perplexing mystery that troubled many hours of both my waking and sleeping life. Then came that meeting with you at Cray, and part of the mystery was accounted for, for you were my old friend Gogo, after all. But it is still a mystery, an awful mystery, that two people should meet as we are meeting now in one and the same dream—should dovetail so accurately into each other's brains. What a link between us two, Mr. Ibbetson, already linked by such memories!

"After meeting you at Cray I felt that I must never meet you again, either waking or dreaming. The discovery that you were Gogo, after all, combined with the preoccupation which as a mere stranger you had already caused me for so long, created such a disturbance in my spirit that—that—there, you must try and imagine it for yourself.

"Even before that revelation at Cray I had often known you were here in my dream, and I had carefully avoided you. . . . though little dreaming you were here in your own dream too! Often from that little dormer window up there I have seen you wandering about the park and avenue in seeming search of *me*, and wondered why and how you came. You drove me into attics and servants' bedrooms to conceal myself from you. It was quite a game of hide-and-seek—*cache-cache*, as we used to call it!

"But after our meeting at Cray I felt there must be no more *cache-cache*; I avoided coming here at all; you drove me away altogether.

"Now try to imagine what I felt when the news of your terrible quarrel with Mr. Ibbetson burst upon the world. I was beside myself! I came here night after night; I looked for you everywhere—in the park, in the Bois de Boulogne, at the Mare d'Auteuil, at St. Cloud—in every place I could think of! And now here you are at last—at last!

"Hush! Don't speak yet! I have soon done!

"Six months ago I lost my poor little son, and, much as I loved him, I cannot wish him back again. In a fortnight I shall be legally separated from my wretched husband—I shall be quite alone in the world! And then, Mr. Ibbetson—oh, *then*, dearest friend that child or woman ever had—every hour that I can steal from my waking existence shall henceforward be devoted to you as long as both of us live, and sleep the same hours out of the twenty-four. My one object and endeavour shall be to make up for the wreck of your sweet and valuable young life. 'Stone walls shall not a prison make, nor iron bars a cage!' [And here she laughed and cried together, so that her eyes, closing up, squeezed out her tears, and I thought, "Oh that I might drink them!"]

"And now I will leave you. I am a weak and loving woman, and must not stay by your side till I can do so without too much self-reproach.

"And indeed I feel I shall soon fall awake from sheer exhaustion of joy. Oh, selfish and jealous wretch that I am, to talk of joy!

"I cannot help rejoicing that no other woman can be to you what I hope to be. No other woman can ever come *near* you! I am your tyrant and your slave—your calamity has made you mine for ever; but all my life—all—all—shall be spent in trying to make you forget yours, and I think I shall succeed."

"Oh, don't make such dreadful haste!" I exclaimed. "Am I dreaming true? What is to prove all this to me when I wake? Either I am the most abject and wretched of men, or life will never have another unhappy moment. How am I to *know*?"

"Listen. Do you remember 'Parva sed Apta, le petit pavillon,' as you used to call it? That is still my home when I am here. It shall be yours, if you like, when the time comes. You will find much to interest you there. Well, to-morrow early, in your cell, you will receive from me an envelope with a slip of paper in it, containing some violets, and the words 'Parva sed Apta—à bientôt' written in violet ink. Will that convince you?"

"Oh yes, yes!"

"Well, then, give me your hands, dearest and best—both hands! I shall soon be here again, by this apple-tree; I shall count the hours. Good-bye!" and she was gone, and I woke.

I woke to the gaslit darkness of my cell. It was just before dawn. One of the warders asked me civilly if I wanted anything, and gave me a drink of water.

I thanked him quietly, and recalled what had just happened to me, with a wonder, an ecstasy, for which I can find no words.

No, it had *not* been a *dream*—of that I felt quite sure—not in any one single respect; there had been nothing of the dream about it except its transcendent, ineffable enchantment.

Every inflection of that beloved voice, with its scarcely perceptible foreign accent that I had never noticed before; every animated gesture, with its subtle reminiscence of both her father and her mother; her black dress trimmed with gray; her black and gray hat; the scent of sandalwood about her—all were more distinctly and vividly impressed upon me than if she had just been actually, and in the flesh, at my bedside. Her tones still rang in my ears. My eyes were full of her: now her profile, so pure and chiselled; now her full face, with her gray eyes (sometimes tender and grave and wet with tears, sometimes half closed in laughter) fixed on mine; her lithe sweet body curved forward, as she sat and clasped her knees; her arched and slender smooth straight feet so delicately shod, that seemed now and then to beat time to her story....

And then that strange sense of the transfusion of life at the touching of the hands! Oh, it was *no dream*! Though what it was I cannot tell....

I turned on my side, happy beyond expression, and fell asleep

again—a dreamless sleep that lasted till I was woke and told to dress.

Some breakfast was brought to me, and *with it an envelope, open, which contained some violets, and a slip of paper, scented with sandal-wood, on which were written, in violet ink, the words—*

“ Parva sed Aptā—à bientôt !

Tarapatapoum.”

I will pass over the time that elapsed between my sentence and its commutation; the ministrations and exhortations of the good chaplain; the kind and touching farewells of Mr. and Mrs. Lintot,



MY EYES WERE FULL OF HER.

who had also believed that I was Ibbetson's son (I undeceived them); the visit of my old friend Mrs. Deane.... and her strange passion of gratitude and admiration.

I have no doubt it would all be interesting enough, if properly remembered and ably told. But it was all too much like a dream—anybody's dream—not one of *mine*—all too slight and flimsy to have left an abiding remembrance, or to matter much.

In due time I was removed to the jail at —, and bade farewell to the world, and adapted myself to the conditions of my new outer life with a good grace and with a very light heart.

The prison routine, leaving the brain so free and unoccupied; the healthy labour, the pure air, the plain, wholesome food—were delightful to me—a much needed daily mental rest after the tumultuous emotions of each night.

For I was soon back again in Passy, where I spent every hour of my sleep, you may be sure, never very far from the old apple-tree,

which went through all its changes, from bare bough to tender shoots and blossoms, from blossom to ripe fruit, from fruit to yellow falling leaf, and then to bare boughs again, and all in a few peaceful nights, which were my days. I flatter myself by this time that I know the habits of a French apple-tree, and its caterpillars!

And all the dear people I loved, and of whom I could never tire, were about—all but one. *The One!*

At last she arrived. The garden door was pushed, the bell rang, and she came across the lawn, radiant, and tall, and swift, and opened



SHE ARRIVED AT LAST.

wide her arms. And there, with our little world around us, all that we had ever loved and cared for, but quite unseen and unheard by them—for the first time in my life since my mother and Madame Seraskier had died I held a woman in my arms, and she pressed her lips to mine.

Round and round the lawn we walked and talked, as we had often done fifteen, sixteen, twenty years ago. There were many things to say. "The Charming Prince" and the "Fairy Tarapatapoum" were "prettily well together"—at last!

The time sped quickly—far too quickly. I said—

"You told me I should see your house—'Parva sed Apta'—that I should find much to interest me there...."

She blushed a little and smiled, and said—

“You mustn’t expect *too much*,” and we soon found ourselves walking thither up the avenue. Thus we had often walked as children, and once—a memorable once—besides.

There stood the little white house with its golden legend, as I had seen it a thousand times when a boy—a hundred since.

How sweet and small it looked in the mellow sunshine! We mounted the stone *perron*, and opened the door and entered. My heart beat violently.

Everything was as it had always been, as far as I could see. Dr. Seraskier sat in a chair by the window reading Schiller, and took no notice of us. His hair moved in the gentle breeze. Overhead we heard the rooms being swept and the beds made.

I followed her into a little lumber-room, where I did not remember to have been before; it was full of odds and ends.

“Why have you brought me here?” I asked.

She laughed and said—

“Open the door in the wall opposite.”

There was no door, and I said so.

Then she took my hand, and lo! there *was* a door! And she pushed, and we entered another suite of apartments that never could have been there before; there had never been room for them, nor ever could have been—in all Passy!

“Come,” she said, laughing and blushing at once; for she seemed nervous and excited and shy—“do you remember—

‘And Neuha led her Torquil by the hand,
And waved along the vault her flaming brand!’

—do you remember your little drawing out of *The Island*, in the green morocco Byron? Here it is, in the top drawer of this beautiful cabinet. Here are all the drawings you ever did for me—plain and coloured—with dates, explanations, etc., all written by myself—*l’album de la fée Tarapatapoum*. They are only duplicates. I have the real ones at my house in Hampshire.

“The cabinet also is a duplicate;—isn’t it a beauty?—it’s from the Czar’s Winter Palace. Everything here is a duplicate, more or less. See, this is a little dining-room;—did you ever see anything so perfect?—it is the famous *salle à manger* of Princesse de Chevaigné. I never use it, except now and then to eat a slice of English household bread with French butter and ‘cassonade.’ Little Mimsey, out there, does so sometimes, when Gogo brings her one, and it makes big Mimsey’s mouth water to see her, so she has to go and do likewise. Would you like a slice?

“You see the cloth is spread, *deux couverts*. There is a bottle of famous champagne from Mr. De Rothschild’s; there’s plenty more where that came from. The flowers are from Chatsworth, and this is a lobster salad for *you*. Papa was great at lobster salads and taught me. I mixed it myself a fortnight ago, and, as you see,

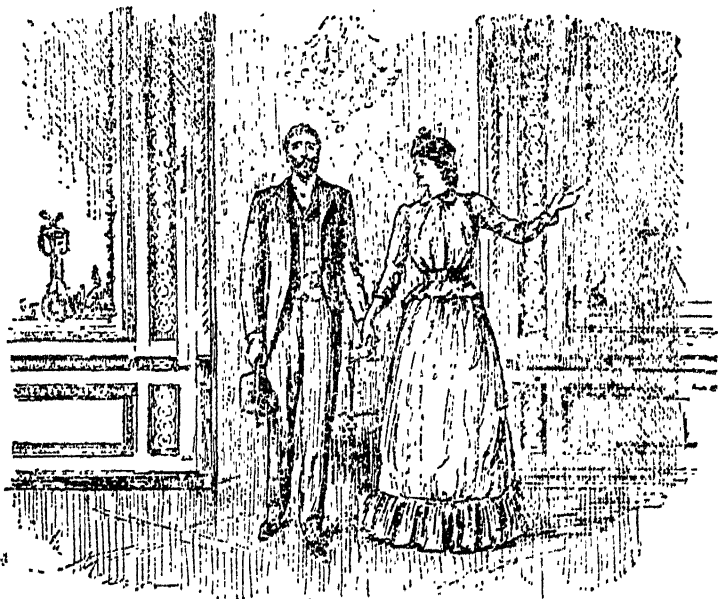
it is as fresh and sweet as if I had only just made it, and the flowers haven't faded a bit.

"Here are cigarettes and pipes and cigars. I hope they are good. I don't smoke myself.

"Isn't all the furniture rare and beautiful? I have robbed every palace in Europe of its very best, and yet the owners are not a penny the worse. You should see upstairs.

"Look at those pictures—the very pick of Raphael and Titian and Velasquez. Look at that piano—I have heard Liszt play upon it over and over again, in Leipsig!

"Here is my library. Every book I ever read is there, and every



'AND NEUHA LED HER TORQUIL BY THE HAND.'

binding I ever admired. I don't often read them, but I dust them carefully. I've arranged that dust shall fall on them in the usual way to make it real, and remind one of the outer life one is so glad to leave. All has to be taken very seriously here, and one must put one's self to a little trouble. See, here is my father's microscope, and under it a small spider caught on the premises by myself. It is still alive. It seems cruel, doesn't it? but it only exists in our brains.

"Look at the dress I've got on—feel it; how every detail is worked out. And you have unconsciously done the same: that's the suit you wore that morning at Cray under the ash-tree—the nicest suit I ever saw. Here is a spot of ink on your sleeve as real as can be (bravo!). And this button is coming off—quite right; I will sew it on, with a dream needle, and dream thread, and a dream thimble!

"This little door leads to every picture-gallery in Europe. It took me a long time to build and arrange them all by myself—quite a week of nights. It is very pleasant to walk there with a good catalogue, and make it rain cats and dogs outside.

"Through this curtain is an opera box—the most comfortable one I've ever been in; it does for theatres as well, and oratorios and concerts and scientific lectures. You shall see from it every performance I've ever been at, in half a dozen languages; you shall hold my hand and understand them all. Every singer that I ever heard, you shall hear. Dear Giulia Grisi shall sing the 'Willow Song' again and again, and you shall hear the applause. Ah, what applause!

"Come into this little room—my favourite; out of *this* window and down these steps we can walk or drive to any place you or I have ever been to, and other places besides. Nothing is far, and we have only to go hand in hand. I don't know yet where my stables and coach-houses are; you must help me to find out. But so far I have never lacked a carriage at the bottom of those steps when I wanted to drive, nor a steam-launch, nor a gondola; nor a lovely place to go to.

"Out of *this* window, from this divan, we can sit and gaze on whatever we like. What shall it be? Just now, you perceive, there is a wild and turbulent sea, with not a ship in sight. Do you hear the waves tumbling and splashing, and see the albatross? I had been reading Keats's 'Ode to the Nightingale,' and was so fascinated by the idea of a lattice opening on the foam

'Of perilous seas by faery lands forlorn'

that I thought it would be nice to have a lattice like that myself. I tried to evolve that sea from my inner consciousness, you know, or rather from seas that I have sailed over. Do you like it? It was done a fortnight ago, and the waves have been tumbling about ever since. How they roar! and hark at the wind! I couldn't manage the 'faery lands.' It wants one lattice for the sea, and one for the land, I'm afraid. You must help me. Meanwhile, what would you like there to-night—the Yosemite Valley? the Nevski Prospect in the winter, with the sledges? the Rialto? the Bay of Naples after sunset, with Vesuvius in eruption?"....

—"O Mary—Mimsey—what *do* I care for Vesuvius, and sunsets, and the Bay of Naples.... *just now?*.... Vesuvius is in my heart!"

Thus began for us both a period of twenty-five years, during which we passed eight or nine hours out of the twenty-four in each other's company—except on a few rare occasions, when illness or some other cause prevented one of us from sleeping at the proper time.

Mary! Mary!

I idolised her while she lived; I idolise her memory.

For her sake all women are sacred to me, even the lowest and

most depraved and God-forsaken. They always found a helping friend in *her*.

How can I pay a fitting tribute to one so near to me—nearer than any woman can ever have been to any man?

I know her mind as I know my own! No two human souls can ever have interpenetrated each other as ours have done, or we should have heard of it. Every thought she ever had from her childhood to her death has been revealed—every thought of mine! Living as we did, it was inevitable. The touch of a finger was enough to establish the strange circuit, and wake a common consciousness of past and present, either hers or mine.

And oh, how thankful am I that some lucky chance has preserved me, murderer and convict as I am, from anything she would have found it impossible to condone!

I try not to think that shyness and poverty, ungainliness and social imbecility combined, have had as much to do as self-restraint and self-respect in keeping me out of so many pitfalls that have been fatal to so many men better and more gifted than myself.

I try to think that her extraordinary affection, the chance result of a persistent impression received in childhood, has followed me through life without my knowing it, and in some occult, mysterious way has kept me from thoughts and deeds that would have rendered me unworthy, even in her too indulgent eyes.

Who knows but that her sweet mother's farewell kiss and blessing, and the tender tears she shed over me when I bade her good-bye at the avenue gate so many years ago, may have had an antiseptic charm? Mary! I have followed her from her sickly, suffering childhood to her girlhood—from her half-ripe gracefully lanky girlhood to the day of her retirement from the world of which she was so great an ornament. From girl to woman it seemed like a triumphal procession through all the courts of Europe—scenes the like of which I have never even dreamed—flattery and strife to have turned the head of any princess! And she was the simple daughter of a working scientist and physician—the granddaughter of a fiddler.

Yet even Austrian court etiquette was waived in favour of the child of plain Dr. Seraskier.

What men have I seen at her feet—how splendid, handsome, gallant, brilliant, chivalrous, lordly, and gay! And to all, from her, the same happy geniality—the same kindly, laughing, frolicsome, innocent gaiety, with never a thought of self.

M. le Major was right—"elle avait toutes les intelligences de la tête et du cœur." And old and young, the best and the worst, seemed to love and respect her alike—and women as well as men—for her perfect sincerity, her sweet reasonableness.

And all this time I was plodding at my dull drawing-board in Pentonville, carrying out another's designs for a stable or a pauper's cottage, and not even achieving that poor task particularly well!

It would have driven me mad with humiliation and jealousy to see this past life of hers, but we saw it all hand in hand together—the magical circuit was established! And I knew, as I saw, how it all affected her, and marvelled at her simplicity in thinking all this pomp and splendour of so little consequence.

And I trembled to find that what space in her heart was not filled by the remembrance of her ever-beloved mother and the image of her father (one of the noblest and best of men) enshrined the ridiculous figure of a small boy in a white silk hat and an Eton jacket. And that small boy was I!

Then came a dreadful twelvemonth that I was fain to leave a blank—the twelvemonth during which her girlish fancy for her husband lasted—and then her life was mine again for ever!

And my life!

The life of a convict is not, as a rule, a happy one; his bed is not generally thought a bed of roses.

Mine was!

If I had been the most miserable leper that ever crawled to his wattled hut in Molokai, I should also have been the happiest of men, could sleep but have found me there, and could I but sleeping have been the friend of sleeping Mary Seraskier. She would have loved me all the more!

She has filled my long life of bondage with such felicity as no monarch has ever dreamed, and has found her own felicity in doing so. That poor, plodding existence I led before my great misadventure, and have tried to describe—she has witnessed almost every hour of it with passionate interest and sympathy, as we went hand in hand together through each other's past. She would at any time have been only too glad to share it, leaving her own.

I dreaded the effect of such a sordid revelation upon one who had lived so brilliantly and at such an altitude. I need have had no fear! Just as she thought me an "angelic hero" at eight years old, she remained persuaded all through her life that I was an Apollo—a misunderstood genius—a martyr!

I am sick with shame when I think of it. But I am not the first unworthy mortal on whom blind, indiscriminating love has chosen to lavish its most priceless treasures. Tarapatapoum is not the only fairy who has idealised a hulking clown with an ass's head into a Prince Charming; the spectacle, alas! is not infrequent. But at least I have been humbly thankful for the undeserved blessing, and known its value. And, moreover, I think I may lay claim to one talent: that of also knowing by intuition when and where and how to love—in a moment—in a flash—and for ever!

Twenty-five years!

It seems like a thousand, so much have we seen and felt and done in that busy enchanted quarter of a century. And yet how quickly the time has sped!

And now I must endeavour to give some account of our wonderful inner life—à deux—a delicate and difficult task.

There is both an impertinence and a lack of taste in any man's laying bare to the public eye—to any eye—the bliss that has come to him through the love of a devoted woman, with whose life his own has been bound up.

The most sympathetic reader is apt to be repelled by such a revelation—to be sceptical of the beauties and virtues and mental gifts of one he has never seen; at all events, to feel that they are no concern of his, and ought to be the subject of a sacred reticence on the part of her too fortunate lover or husband.

The lack of such reticence has marred the interest of many an autobiography—of many a novel, even; and in private life, who does not know by painful experience how embarrassing to the listener such tender confidences can sometimes be? I will try my best not to transgress in this particular. If I fail (I may have failed already), I can only plead that the circumstances are quite exceptional and not to be matched; and that allowances must be made for the deep gratitude I owe and feel over and above even my passionate admiration and love.

For the next three years my life has nothing to show but the alternation of such honeymooning as never was before with a dull but contented prison life, not one hour of which is worth recording, or even remembering, except as a foil to its alternative.

It had but one hour for me, the bed hour, and fortunately that was an early one.

Healthily tired in body, blissfully expectant in mind, I would lie on my back, with my hands duly crossed under my head, and sleep would soon steal over me like balm; and before I had forgotten who and what and where I really was, I would reach the goal on which my will was intent, and waking up, find my body in another place, in another garb, on a couch by an enchanted window, still with my arms crossed behind my head—in the sacramental attitude.

Then would I stretch my limbs and slip myself free of my outer life, as a new-born butterfly from the durance of its self-spun cocoon, with an unutterable sense of youth and strength and freshness and felicity; and opening my eyes I would see on the adjacent couch the form of Mary, also supine, but motionless and inanimate as a statue. Nothing could wake her to life till the time came: her hours were somewhat later, and she was still in the toils of the outer life I had just left behind me.

And these toils, in her case, were more complicated than in mine. Although she had given up the world, she had many friends and an immense correspondence. And then, being a woman endowed with boundless health and energy, splendid buoyancy of animal spirits, and a great capacity for business, she had made for herself many cares and occupations.

She was the virtual mistress of a home for fallen women, a reformatory for juvenile thieves, and a children's convalescent hospital—to all of which she gave her immediate personal superintendence,

and almost every penny she had. She had let her house in Hampshire, and lived with a couple of female servants in a small furnished house on Camden Hill. She did without a carriage, and went about in cabs and omnibuses, dressed like a daily governess, though nobody could appear more regally magnificent than she did when we were together.

She still kept her name and title, as a potent weapon of influence on behalf of her charities, and wielded it mercilessly in her constant raid on the purse of the benevolent Philistine, who is fond of great people.

All of which gave rise to much comment that did not affect her equanimity in the least.

She also attended lectures, committees, boards, and councils; opened bazaars and soup kitchens and coffee taverns, etc. The list of her self-imposed tasks was endless. Thus her outer life was filled to overflowing, and, unlike mine, every hour of it was worth record—as I well know, who have witnessed it all. But this is not the place in which to write the outer life of the Duchess of Towers; another hand has done that, as everybody knows.

Every page henceforward must be sacred to Mary Seraskier, the “*fée Tarapatapoum*” of “*Magna sed Apta*” (for so we had called the new home and palace of art she had added on to “*Parva sed Apta*”, the home of her childhood).

To return thither, where we left her lying unconscious. Soon the colour would come back to her cheeks, the breath to her nostrils, the pulse to her heart, and she would wake to her Eden, as she called it—our common inner life—that we might spend it in each other’s company for the next eight hours.

Pending this happy moment, I would make coffee (such coffee!), and smoke a cigarette or two; and to fully appreciate the bliss of *that*, one must be a habitual smoker who lives his real life in an English jail.

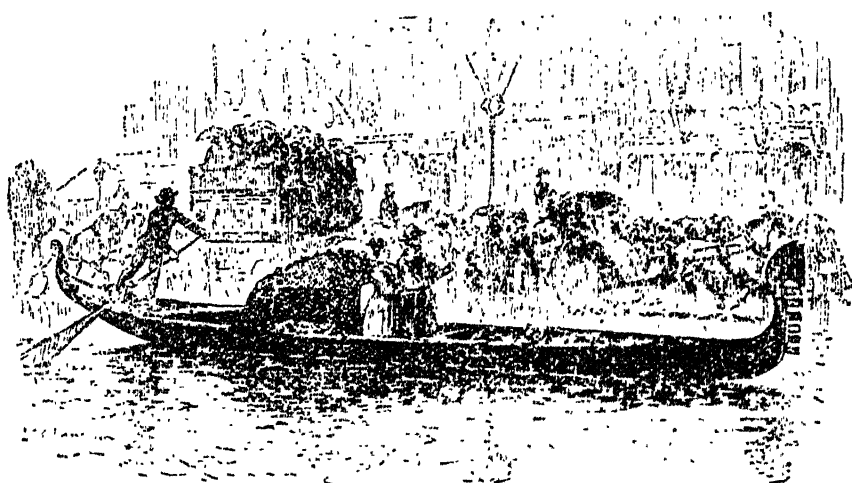
When she awoke from her sixteen hours’ busy trance in the outer world, such a choice of pleasures lay before us as no other mortal has ever known. She had been all her life a great traveller, and had dwelt in many lands and cities, and seen more of life and the world and nature than most people. I had but to take her hand, and one of us had but to wish, and, lo! wherever either of us had been, whatever either of us had seen or heard or felt, or even eaten or drunk, there it was all over again to choose from, with the other to share in it—such a hypnotism of ourselves and each other as was never dreamed of before.

Everything was as lifelike, as real to us both, as it had been to either at the actual time of its occurrence, with an added freshness and charm that never belonged to mortal-existence. It was no dream; it was a second life, a better land.

We had, however, to stay within certain bounds, and beware of transgressing certain laws that we discovered for ourselves, but

could not quite account for. For instance, it was fatal to attempt exploits that were outside of our real experience; to fly, or to jump from a height, or do any of those non-natural things that make the charm and wonder of ordinary dreams. If we did so our true dream was blurred, and became as an ordinary dream—vague, futile, unreal, and untrue—the baseless fabric of a vision. Nor must we alter ourselves in any way; even to the shape of a finger-nail, we must remain ourselves; although we kept ourselves at our very best, and could choose what age we should be. We chose from twenty-six to twenty-eight, and stuck to it.

Yet there were many things, quite as impossible in real life, that we could do with impunity—most delightful things!



TO ST. JAMES'S HALL, PICCADILLY.

For instance, after the waking cup of coffee, it was certainly delightful to spend a couple of hours in the Yosemite Valley, leisurely strolling about and gazing at the giant pines—a never-palling source of delight to both of us—breathing the fragrant fresh air, looking at our fellow tourists and listening to their talk, with the agreeable consciousness that, solid and substantial as we were to each other, we were quite inaudible, invisible, and intangible to them. Often we would dispense with the tourists, and have the Yosemite Valley all to ourselves. (Always there, and in whatever place she had visited with her husband, we would dispense with the figure of her former self and him, a sight I could not have borne).

When we had strolled and gazed our fill, it was delightful again, just by a slight effort of her will and a few moments' closing of our eyes, to find ourselves driving along the Via Cornice to an exquisite garden concert in Dresden, or being rowed in a gondola to a Saturday Pop at St. James's Hall. And thence, jumping into a hansom, we

would be whisked through Piccadilly and the park and the Arc de Triomphe home to "Magna sed Apta", Rue de la Pompe, Passy (a charming drive, and not a bit too long), just in time for dinner.

A very delicious little dinner, judiciously ordered out of *her* remembrance, not *mine* (and served in the most exquisite little dining-room in all Paris—the Princesse de Chevagné's): "huîtres d'Ostende," let us say, and "soupe à la bonne femme," with a "perdrix aux choux" to follow, and pancakes, and "fromage de Brie"; and to drink, a bottle of "Romané Conti"; without even the bother of waiters to change the dishes; a wish, a moment's shutting of the eyes—*augenblick!* and it was done—and then we could wait on each other.

— After my prison fare, and with nothing but tenpenny London dinners to recollect in the immediate past, I trust I shall not be thought a gross materialist for appreciating these small banquets, and in such company. (The only dinner I could recall which was not a tenpenny one, except the old dinner of my childhood, was that famous dinner at Cray, where I had discovered that the Duchess of Towers was Mimsey Seraskier, and I did not eat much of *that*.)

Then a cigarette and a cup of coffee, and a glass of curaçoa; and after, to reach our private box we had but to cross the room and lift a curtain.

And there before us was the theatre or opera-house brilliantly lighted, and the instruments tuning up, and the splendid company pouring in: crowned heads, famous beauties, world-renowned warriors and statesmen, Garibaldi, Gortschakoff, Cavour, Bismarck, and Moltke, now so famous, and who not? Mary would point them out to me. And in the next box Dr. Seraskier and his tall daughter, who seemed friends with all that brilliant crowd.

Now it was St. Petersburg, now Berlin, now Vienna, Paris, Naples, Milan, London—every great city in turn. But our box was always the same, and always the best in the house, and I the one person privileged to smoke my cigar in the face of all that royalty, fashion, and splendour.

Then, after the overture, up went the curtain. If it was a play, and the play was in German or Russian or Italian, I had but to touch Mary's little finger to understand it all—a true but incomprehensible thing. For well as I might understand, I could not have spoken a word of either, and the moment that slight contact was discontinued, they might as well have been acting in Greek or Hebrew, for *me*.

But it was for music we cared the most, and I think I may say that of music during those three years (and ever after) we have had our glut. For all through her busy waking life Mary found time to hear whatever good music was going on in London, that she might bring it back to me at night; and we would rehear it together, again and again, and *da capo*.

It is a rare privilege for two private individuals, and one of them

a convict, to assist at a performance honoured by the patronage and presence of crowned heads, and yet be able to encore any particular thing that pleases them. How often have we done that!

O Joachim! O Clara Schumann! O Piatti!—all of whom I know so well, but have never heard with the fleshly ear! O others, whom it would be invidious to mention without mentioning all—a glorious list! How we have made you, all unconscious, repeat the same movements over and over again, without ever from you a sign of



TO THE OPERA-BOX.

impatience or fatigue! How often have we summoned Liszt to play to us on his own favourite piano, which adorned our own favourite sitting-room! How little he knew (or will ever know now, alas!) what exquisite delight he gave us!

O Patti, Angelina! O Santley and Sims Reeves! O De Soria, nightingale of the drawing-room, I wonder you have a note left!

And you, Ristori, and you, Salvini, et vous, divine Sarah, qui débutez alors! On me dit que votre adorable voix a perdu un peu de sa première fraîcheur. Cela ne m'étonne pas! Bien sûr, nous y sommes pour quelque chose!

And then the picture-galleries, the museums, the botanical and zoological gardens of all countries—"Magna sed Apta" had space for them all, even to the Elgin Marbles room of the British Museum, which I added myself.

That enchanted hours have we spent among the pictures and ues of the world, weeding them here and there, perhaps, or ging them differently or placing them in what we thought a er light! The "Venus of Milo" showed to far greater advantage 'Magna sed Apta' than at the Louvre.

nd when busied thus delightfully at home, and to enhance the ght, we made it shocking bad weather outside; it rained cats dogs, or else the north wind piped, and snow fell on the desolate lens of "Magna sed Apta", and whitened the landscape as far ye could see.

learest to our hearts however were many pictures of our own e, for we were moderns of the moderns, after all, in spite of our rts at self-culture.

here was scarcely a living or recently living master in Europe ose best works were not in our possession so lighted and hung : even the masters themselves would have been content; for had plenty of space at our command, and each picture had a wall itself, so toned as to do full justice to its beauty, and a comfortable for two just opposite.

ut in the little room we most lived in, the room with the magic dow, we had crowded a few special favourites of the English ool, for we had so much foreign blood in us that we were more ish than John Bull himself—*plus royalistes que le Roi*.

here were Millais's "Autumn Leaves," his "Youth of Sir Walter eigh," his "Chill October"; Watts's "Endymion," and "Orpheus Eurydice"; Burne-Jones's "Chant d'Amour," and his "Laus eris"; Alma-Tadema's "Audiéce of Agrippa," and the "Women Amphissa"; J. Whistler's portrait of his mother; the "Venus and culapius," by E. J. Poynter; F. Leighton's "Daphnephoria"; rge Mason's "Harvest-Moon"; and Frederic Walker's "Harbour Refuge," and, of course, Merridew's "Sun-God."

While on a screen, designed by H. S. Marks, and exquisitely orated round the margin with golden plovers and their eggs ich I adore), were smaller gems in oil and water-colour that Mary fallen in love with at one time or another. The immortal "Moon-it Sonata," by Whistler; E. J. Poynter's exquisite "Our Lady of Fields" (dated Paris 1857); a pair of adorable "Bimbi" by Prinsep, who seems very fond of children; T. R. Lamont's ching "L'Après Dîner de l'Abbé Constantin," with the sweet playing the old spinet; and that admirable work of T. Arm-ing, in his earlier and more realistic manner, "Le Zouave et la unou," not to mention splendid rough sketches by John Leech, arles Keene, Tenniel, Sambourne, Furniss, Caldecott, etc.; to mention, also, endless little sketches in silver point of a most ossibly colossal, black-avised, shaggy-coated St. Bernard—ed with the familiar French name of some gay troubadour of the oil some stray half-breed like myself and who seems to have

Then suddenly, in the midst of all this unparalleled artistic splendour, we felt that a something was wanting. There was a certain hollowness about it; and we discovered that in our case the principal motives for collecting all these beautiful things were absent.

1. We were not the sole possessors.
2. We had nobody to show them to.
3. Therefore we could take no pride in them.

And found that when we wanted bad weather for a change, and the joys of home, we could be quite as happy in my old schoolroom, where the squirrels and the monkey and the hedgehog were, with



THE NURSERY SCHOOLROOM.

each of us a cane-bottomed armchair by the wood fire, each roasting chestnuts for the other, and one book between us, for one of us to read out loud; or, better still, the morning and evening papers she had read a few hours earlier; and marvellous to relate, she had not even *read* them when awake! she had merely glanced through them carefully, taking in the aspect of each column one after another, from top to bottom—and yet she was able to read out every word from the dream-paper she held in her hands—thus truly chewing the very cud of journalism!

This always seemed to us, in a small but practical way, the most complete and signal triumph of mind over matter we had yet achieved.

Not, indeed, that we could read much, we had so much to talk about.

Unfortunately, the weak part of "*Magna sed Apta*" was its library. Naturally it could only consist of books that one or the other of us

had read when awake. She had led such an active life that but little leisure had been left her for books, and I had read only as an everyday young man reads who is fond of reading.

However, such books as we *had* read were made the most of, and so magnificently bound that even their authors would have blushed with pride and pleasure had they been there to see. And though we had little time for reading them over again, we could enjoy the true bibliophilous delight of gazing at their backs, and taking them down and fingering them and putting them carefully back again.

In most of these treats, excursions, festivities, and pleasures of the fireside, Mary was naturally leader and hostess; it could scarcely have been otherwise.

There was once a famous Mary, of whom it was said that to know her was a liberal education. I think I may say that to have known Mary Seraskier has been all that to me!

But now and then I would make some small attempt at returning her hospitality.

We have slummed together in Clerkenwell, Smithfield, Cow Cross, Petticoat Lane, Ratcliffe Highway, and the East India and West India docks.

She has been with me to penny gaffs and music halls; to Greenwich Fair, and Cremorne and Rosherville gardens—and liked them all. She knew Pentonville as well as I do; and my old lodgings there, where we have both leaned over my former shoulder as I read or drew. It was she who rescued from oblivion my little prophetic song about “The Chime”, which I had quite forgotten. She has been to Mr. Lintot’s parties, and found them most amusing—especially Mr. Lintot.

And going further back into the past, she has roamed with me all over Paris, and climbed with me the towers of Notre Dame, and looked in vain for the mystic word *‘Ανάγκη!*

But I had also better things to show, untravelled as I was.

She had never seen Hampstead Heath, which I knew by heart; and Hampstead Heath at any time, but especially on a sunny morning in late October, is not to be disdained by any one.

Half the leaves have fallen, so that one can see the fading glory of those that remain; yellow and brown and pale and hectic red, shining like golden guineas and bright copper coins against the rich, dark, business-like green of the trees that mean to flourish all the winter through, like the tall slanting pines near the Spaniards, and the old cedar-trees, and hedges of yew and holly, for which the Hampstead gardens are famous.

Before us lies a sea of fern, gone a russet-brown from decay, in which are isles of dark green gorse, and little trees with little scarlet and orange and lemon-coloured leaflets fluttering down, and running after each other on the bright grass, under the brisk west wind which makes the willows rustle, and turn up the whites of their leaves in pious resignation to the coming change.

Harrow-on-the-Hill, with its pointed spire, rises blue in the distance; and distant ridges, like receding waves, rise into blueness, one after the other, out of the low-lying mist; the last ridge blueely melting into space. In the midst of it all gleams the Welsh Harp Lake, like a piece of sky that has become unstuck and tumbled into the landscape with its shiny side up.

On the other side, all London, with nothing but the gilded cross of St. Paul's on a level with the eye; it lies at our feet, as Paris used to do from the heights of Passy, a sight to make true dreamers gaze and think and dream the more; and there we sit thinking and dreaming and gazing our fill, hand in hand, our spirits rushing together.

Once as we sat we heard the clatter of hoofs behind us, and there was a troop of my old regiment out exercising. Invisible to all but ourselves, and each other, we watched the wanton troopers riding by on their meek black chargers.

First came the cornet—a sunny-haired Apollo, a gilded youth, graceful and magnificent to the eye—careless, fearless, but stupid, harsh, and proud—an English Phébus de Châteaupers—the son of a great contractor; I remembered him well, and that he loved me not. Then the rank and file in stable jackets, most of them (but for a stalwart corporal here and there), raw, lanky youths, giving promise of much future strength, and each leading a second horse; and amongst them, longest and lankiest of them all, but ruddy as a ploughboy, and stolidly whistling "*On revient toujours à ses premiers amours*," rode my former self—a sight (or sound) that seemed to touch some tender chord in Mary's nature, where there were so many; since it filled her eyes with tears.

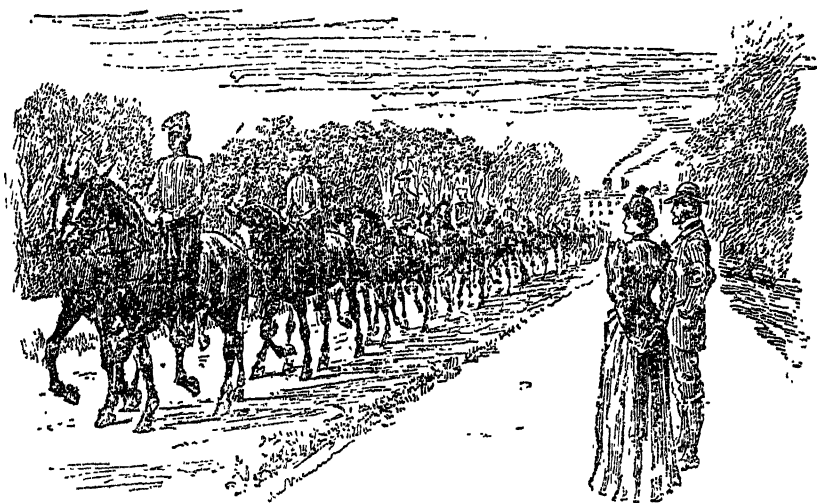
To describe in full a honeymoon filled with such adventures, and that lasted for three years, is unnecessary. It would be but another superficial record of travel, by another unskilled pen. And what a pen is wanted for such a theme! It was not mere life, it was the very cream and essence of life, that we shared with each other—all the toil and trouble, the friction and fatigue, left out. The necessary earthly journey through time and space from one joy to another was omitted, unless such a journey were a joy in itself.

For instance, a pleasant hour can be spent on the deck of a splendid steamer, as it cleaves its way through a sapphire tropical sea, bound for some lovely West Indian islet; with a good cigar and the dearest companion in the world, watching the dolphins and the flying-fish, and mildly interesting one's self in one's fellow-passengers, the captain, the crew. And then, the hour spent and the cigar smoked out, it is well to shut one's eyes and have one's self quietly lowered down the side of the vessel into a beautiful sledge, and then, half smothered in costly furs, to be whirled along the frozen Neva to a ball at the Winter Palace, there to valse with one's Mary among all the beauty and chivalry of St. Petersburg, and never a soul to find fault with one's valsing, which at first was far from perfect, or one's attire, which was not that of the fashionable world of the

day, nor was Mary's either. We were æsthetic people, and very Greek, who made for ourselves fashions of our own, which I will not describe.

Where have we not waltzed together, from Buckingham Palace downward? I confess I grew to take a delight in valsing, or waltzing, or whatever it is properly called; and although it is not much to boast of, I may say that after a year or two no better dancer than I was to be found in all Vienna.

And here, by the way, I may mention what pleasure it gave me (hand in hand with Mary, of course, as usual) to renew and improve my acquaintance with our British aristocracy, begun so agreeably many years ago at Lady Cray's concert.



"ON REVIENT TOUJOURS À SES PREMIERS AMOURS."

Our British aristocracy does not waltz well by any means, and lacks lightness generally; but it may gratify and encourage some of its members to hear that Peter Ibbetson (ex-private soldier, architect and surveyor, convict and criminal lunatic), who has had unrivalled opportunities for mixing with the cream of European society, considers our British aristocracy quite the best-looking, best-dressed, and best-behaved aristocracy of them all, and the most sensible and the least exclusive—perhaps the most sensible *because* the least exclusive.

It often snubs, but does not altogether repulse, those gifted and privileged outsiders who (just for the honour and glory of the thing) are ever so ready to flatter and instruct and amuse it, and run its errands, and fetch and carry, and tumble for its pleasure, and even to marry such of its "ugly ducklings" (or shall we say such of its

"unprepossessing cygnets"?) as cannot hope to mate with birds of their own feather.

For it has the true English eye for physical beauty.

Indeed, it is much given to throw the handkerchief—successfully, of course—and, most fortunately for itself, beyond the pale of its own narrow precincts—nay, beyond the broad Atlantic, even, to the land where beauty and dollars are to be found in such happy combination.

Nor does it disdain the comeliness of the daughters of Israel, nor their shekels, nor their brains, nor their ancient and most valuable blood. It knows the secret virtue of that mechanical transfusion of fluids familiar to science under the name of "endosmoses" and "exosmoses" (I hope I have spelled them rightly), and practises the same. Whereby it shows itself wise in its generation, and will endure the longer, which cannot be very long.

Peter Ibbetson (etc. etc.), for one, wishes it no manner of harm.

* * * * *

But to return. With all these temptations of travel and amusement and society and the great world, such was our insatiable fondness for "the pretty place of our childhood" and all its associations, that our greatest pleasure of all was to live old life over again and again, and make Gogo and Mimsey and our parents and cousins and M. le Major go through their old paces once more; and to recall *new* old paces for them, which we were sometimes able to do, out of stray forgotten bits of the past; to hunt for which was the most exciting sport in the world.

Our tenderness for these beloved shades increased with familiarity. We could see all the charm and goodness and kindness of these dear fathers and mothers of ours with the eyes of matured experience, for we were pretty much of an age with them now; no other children could ever say as much since the world began, and how few young parents could bear such a scrutiny as ours!

Ah! what would we not have given to extort just a spark of recognition, but that was impossible; or to have been able to whisper just a word of warning, which would have averted the impending strokes of inexorable fate! They might have been alive now, perhaps—old indeed, but honoured and loved as no parents ever were before. How different everything would have been! Alas! alas!

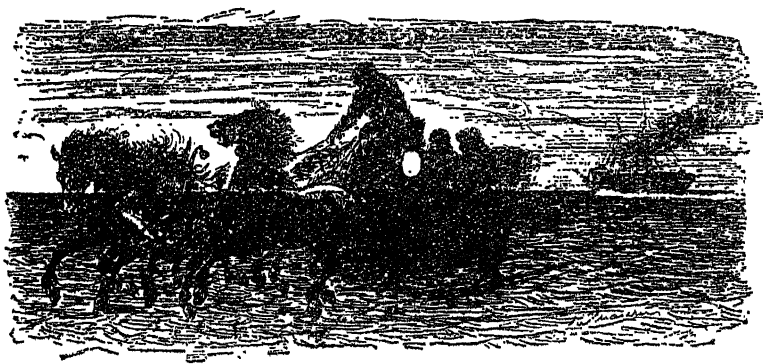
And of all things in the world, we never tired of that walk through the avenue and park and Bois de Boulogne to the Mare d'Auteuil; strolling there leisurely on an early spring afternoon, just in time to spend a midsummer hour or two on its bank, and watch the old water-rat and the dytiscus and the tadpoles and newts, and see the frogs jump; and then walking home at dusk in the late autumn for tea and roast chestnuts in the schoolroom of my old home; and then back to warm, well-lighted "Magna sed Apta" by moonlight, through the avenue on New Year's Eve, ankle deep in snow; all in a few short hours.

Dream winds and dream weathers—what an enchantment! And all real!

Soft caressing rains that do not wet us if we do not wish them to; sharp frosts that brace but never chill; blazing suns that neither scorch nor dazzle.

Blustering winds of early spring, that seem to sweep right through these solid frames of ours, and thrill us to the very marrow with the old heroic excitement and ecstasy we knew so well in happy childhood but can no longer feel now when awake!

Bland summer breezes, heavy with the scent of long-lost French woods and fields and gardens in full flower; swift, soft moist equinoctial gales, blowing from the far-off orchards of Meudon, or the old market gardens of Suresnes in their autumnal decay, and laden,



TO THE WINTER PALACE.

we do not know why, with strange, mysterious, troubling reminiscence too subtle and elusive to be expressed in any tongue—too sweet for any words! And then the dark December wind that comes down from the north, and brings the short, early twilights and the snow, and drives us home, pleasantly shivering, to the chimney-corner and the hissing logs—*chez nous!*

It is the last night of an old year—*la veille du jour de l'an.*

Ankle-deep in snow, we walk to warm, well-lighted "*Magna sed Apta,*" up the moonlit avenue. It is dream snow, and yet we feel it crunch beneath our feet; but if we turn to look, the tracks of our footsteps have disappeared—and we cast no shadows, though the moon is full!

M. le Major goes by, and Yverdon the postman, and Père François, with his big sabots, and others, and their footprints remain—and their shadows are strong and sharp!

They wish each other the compliments of the season as they meet and pass; they wish us nothing! We give them *la bonne année* at the tops of our voices; they do not heed us in the least, though our

voices are as resonant as theirs. We are wishing them a "Happy New Year," that dawned for good or evil nearly twenty years ago.

Out comes Gogo from the Seraskiers', with Mimsey. He makes a snowball and throws it. It flies straight through me, and splashes itself on Père François's broad back. "Ah, ce polisson de Monsieur



"MAMAN M'A DONNÉ QUAT' SOUS."

Gogo.... attendez un peu!" and Père François returns the compliment—straight through me again, as it seems; and I do not even feel it! Mary and I are as solid to each other as flesh and blood can make us. We cannot even touch these dream people without their melting away into thin air; we can only hear and see them, but that in perfection!

There goes little André Corbin, the poulterer's son, running along the slippery top of Madame Pelé's garden wall, which is nearly ten feet high.

"Good heavens," cries Mary, "stop him! Don't you remember? When he gets to the corner he'll fall down and break both his legs!"

I rush and bellow out to him—

"Descends donc, malheureux; tu vas te casser les deux jambes! Saute! saute!" . . . I cry, holding out my arms. He does not pay the slightest attention; he reaches the corner, followed low down by Gogo and Mimsey, who are beside themselves with generous envy and admiration. Stimulated by their applause, he becomes more foolhardy than ever, and even tries to be droll, and standing on one leg, sings a little song that begins—

"Maman m'a donné quat' sous
Pour m'en aller à la foire,
Non pas pour manger ni boire,
Mais pour m'égaler d'joux!"

Then suddenly down he slips, poor boy, and breaks both his legs below the knee on an iron rail, whereby he becomes a cripple for life.

All this sad little tragedy of a New Year's Eve plays itself anew. The sympathetic crowd collects; Mimsey and Gogo weep; the heart-broken parents arrive, and the good little doctor Larcher; and Mary and I look on like criminals, so impossible it seems not to feel that we might have prevented it all!

We two alone are alive and substantial in all this strange world of shadows, who seem, as far as we can hear and see, no less substantial and alive than ourselves. They exist for us; we do not exist for them. We exist for each other only, waking or sleeping; for even the people among whom our waking life is spent know hardly more of us, and what our real existence is, than poor little André Corbin who has just broken his legs for us over again!

And so, back to "Magna sed Apta," both saddened by this deplorable misadventure, to muse and talk and marvel over these wonders; penetrated to the very heart's core by a dim sense of some vast, mysterious power, latent in the sub-consciousness of man—unheard of, undreamed of as yet, but linking him with the Infinite and the Eternal.

And how many things we always had to talk about besides!

Heaven knows, I am not a brilliant conversationalist, but she was the most easily amusable person in the world—interested in everything that interested me, and I disdamaged myself (to use one of her Anglo-Gallicisms) of the sulky silence of years.

Of her as a companion it is not for me to speak. It would be impertinent, and even ludicrous, for a person in my position to dilate on the social gifts of the famous Duchess of Towers.

Incredible as it may appear, however, most of our conversation was about very common and earthly topics—her homes and refuges, the difficulties of their management, her eternal want of money, her many schemes and plans and experiments and failures and

disenchantments—in all of which I naturally took a very warm interest. And then my jail, and all that occurred there—in all of which I became interested myself because it interested her so passionately; she knew every corner of it that I knew, every detail of the life there—the name, appearance, and history of almost every inmate, and criticised its internal economy with a practical knowledge of affairs, a business-like sagacity at which I never ceased to marvel.

One of my drollest recollections is of a visit she paid there *in the flesh*, accompanied by some famous philanthropists of both sexes. I was interviewed by them all as the model prisoner, who, but for his unorthodoxy, was a credit to the institution. She listened demurely to my intelligent answers when I was questioned as to my bodily health, etc., and asked whether I had any complaints to make. Complaints! Never was jail-bird so thoroughly satisfied with his nest—so healthy, so happy, so well-behaved. She took notes all the time.

Eight hours before we had been strolling hand in hand through the Uffizi Gallery in Florence; eight hours later we should be in each other's arms.

* * * * *

Strange to relate, this happiness of ours—so deep, so acute, so transcendent, so unmatched in all the history of human affection—was not always free of unreasonable longings and regrets. Man is never so blessed but what he would have his blessedness still greater.

The reality of our close companionship, of our true possession of each other (during our allotted time), was absolute, complete, and thorough. No Darby that ever lived can ever have had sweeter, warmer, more tender memories of any Joan than I have now of Mary Seraskier! Although each was, in a way, but a seeming illusion of the other's brain, the illusion was no illusion for us. It was an illusion that showed the truth, as does the illusion of sight. Like twin kernels in one shell ("Philipschen," as Mary called it), we touched at more points and were closer than the rest of mankind (with each of them a separate shell of his own). We tried and tested this in every way we could devise, and never found ourselves at fault, and never ceased to marvel at so great a wonder. For instance, I received letters from her in jail (and answered them) in an intricate cipher we had invented and perfected together entirely during sleep, and referring to things that had happened to us both when together.¹

Our privileges were such as probably no human beings could have ever enjoyed before. Time and space were annihilated for us at the mere wish of either—we lived in a palace of delight; all conceivable luxuries were ours—and, better than all, and perennially, such freshness and elation as belong only to the morning of life—and such a love for each other (the result of circumstances not to be paralleled) as time could never slake or quench till death should come

¹ Several of these letters are in my possession. ("MADGE PLUNKET").

and part us. All this, and more, was our portion for eight hours out of every twenty-four.

So what must we do sometimes, but fret that the sixteen hours which remained did not belong to us as well; that we must live two-thirds of our lives apart; that we could not share the toils and troubles of our work-a-day, waking existence, as we shared the blissful guerdon of our seeming sleep—the glories of our common dream.

And then we would lament the lost years we had spent in mutual ignorance and separation—a deplorable waste of life; when life, sleeping or waking, was so short.

How different things might have been with us had we but known!

We need never have lost sight and touch of each other; we might have grown up, and learned and worked and struggled together from the first—boy and girl, brother and sister, lovers, man and wife—and yet have found our blessed dreamland and dwelt in it just the same.

Children might have been born to us! Sweet children, *beaux comme le jour*, as in Perrault's fairy tales; even beautiful and good as their mother.

And as we talked of these imaginary little beings and tried to picture them, we felt in ourselves such a stupendous capacity for loving the same that we would fall to weeping on each other's shoulders. Full well I knew, even as if they had formed part of my own personal experience, all the passion and tenderness, all the wasted anguish of her brief, ill-starred motherhood: the very ache of my jealousy that she should have borne a child to another man was forgotten in that keen and thorough comprehension! Ah yes.... that hungry love, that woful pity, which not to know is hardly quite to have lived! Childless as I am (though old enough to be a grandfather), I have it all by heart!

Never could we hope for son or daughter of our own. For us the blessed flower of love in rich, profuse, unfading bloom; but its blessed fruit of life, never, never, never!

Our only children were Mimsey and Gogo, between whom and ourselves was an impassable gulf, and who were unconscious of our very existence, except for Mimsey's strange consciousness that a Fairy Tarapatapoum and a Prince Charming were watching over them.

All this would always end as it could not but end, in our realising the more fully our utter dependence on each other for all that made life not only worth living, ingrates that we were, but a heaven on earth for us both; and, indeed, we could not but recognise that merely thus to love and be loved was in itself a thing so immense (without all the other blessings we had) that we were fain to tremble at our audacity in daring to wish for more.

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Thus sped three years, and would have sped all the rest, perhaps, but for an incident that made an epoch in our joint lives, and turned all our thoughts and energies in a new direction.

PART SIXTH

Some petty annoyance to which I had been subjected by one of the prison authorities had kept me awake for a little while after I had gone to bed, so that when at last I awoke in "Magna sed Apta," and lay on my couch there (with that ever-fresh feeling of coming to life in heaven after my daily round of work in an earthly jail), I was conscious that Mary was there already, making coffee, the fragrance of which filled the room, and softly humming a tune as she did so—a quaint, original, but most beautiful tune, that thrilled me with indescribable emotion, for I had never heard it with the bodily ear before, and yet it was as familiar to me as "God save the Queen."

As I listened with rapt ears and closed eyes, wonderful scenes passed before my mental vision: the beautiful white-haired lady of my childish dreams, leading a small *female* child by the hand, and that child was myself; the pigeons and their tower, the stream and the water-mill; the white-haired young man with red heels to his shoes; a very fine lady, very tall, stout, and middle-aged, magnificently dressed in brocaded silk; a park with lawns and alleys and trees cut into trim formal shapes; a turreted castle—all kinds of charming scenes and people of another age and country.

"What on earth is that wonderful tune, Mary?" I exclaimed, when she had finished it.

"It's my favourite tune," she answered; "I seldom hum it for fear of wearing away its charm. I suppose that is why you have never heard it before. Isn't it lovely? I've been trying to lull you awake with it.

"My grandfather, the violinist, used to play it with variations of his own, and made it famous in his time; but it was never published, and it's now forgotten.

"It is called 'Le Chant du Triste Commensal,' and was composed by his grandmother, a beautiful French-woman, who played the fiddle too; but not as a profession. He remembered her playing it when he was a child and she was quite an old lady, just as I remember *his* playing it when I was a girl in Vienna, and he was a white-haired old man. She used to play holding her fiddle downward, on her knee, it seems; and always played in perfect tune, quite in the middle of the note, and with excellent taste and expression; it was her playing that decided his career. But she was like 'Single-speech Hamilton,' for this was the only thing she ever composed. She composed it under great grief and excitement, just after her husband had died from the bite of a wolf, and just before the birth of her twin-daughters—her only children—one of whom was my great-grandmother."

"And what was this wonderful old lady's name?"

"Gatienne Aubéry; she married a Breton squire called Budes, who was a *gentilhomme verrier* near St. Prest, in Anjou—that is, he made glass—decanter, water-bottles, tumblers, and all that, I suppose—in spite of his nobility. It was not considered derogatory to do so; indeed, it was the only trade permitted to the *noblesse*, and one had to be at least a squire to engage in it.

"She was a very notable woman, *la belle Verrière*, as she was called; and she managed the glass factory for many years after her husband's death, and made lots of money for her two daughters."

"How strange!" I exclaimed; "Gatienne Aubéry! Dame du Brail—Budes—the names are quite familiar to me. Mathurin Budes, Seigneur de Monhoudéard et de Verney le Moustier."

"Yes, that's it. How wonderful that you should know! One daughter, Jeanne, married my great-grandfather, an officer in the Hungarian army; and Seraskier, the fiddler, was their only child. The other (so like her sister that only her mother could distinguish them) was called Anne, and married a Comte de Bois something."

"Boismorinel. Why, all those names are in my family too. My father used to make me paint their arms and quarterings when I was a child, on Sunday mornings, to keep me quiet. Perhaps we are related by blood, you and I."

"Oh, that would be too delightful!" said Mary. "I wonder how we could find out? Have you no family papers?"

I. "There were lots of them, in a horse-hair trunk, but I don't know where they are now. What good would family papers have been to me? Ibbetson took charge of them when I changed my name. I suppose his lawyers have got them."

She. "Happy thought; we will do without lawyers. Let us go round to your old house, and make Gogo paint the quarterings over again for us, and look over his shoulder."

Happy thought, indeed! We drank our coffee and went straight to my old house, with the wish (immediate father to the deed) that Gogo should be there, once more engaged in his long-forgotten accomplishment of painting coats of arms.

It was a beautiful Sunday morning, and we found Gogo hard at work at a small table by an open window. The floor was covered with old deeds and parchments and family papers; and le beau Pasquier, at another table, was deep in his own pedigree, making notes on the margin—an occupation in which he delighted—and unconsciously humming as he did so. The sunny room was filled with the penetrating soft sound of his voice, as a conservatory is filled with the scent of its flowers.

By the strangest inconsistency my dear father, a genuine republican at heart (for all his fancied loyalty to the white lily of the Bourbons), a would-be scientist, who in reality was far more impressed by a clever and industrious French mechanic than by a prince (and would, I think, have preferred the former's friendship and society),

yet took both a pleasure and a pride in his quaint old parchments and obscure quarterings. So would I, perhaps, if things had gone differently with me—for what true democrat, however intolerant of such weakness in others, ever thinks lightly of his own personal claims to aristocratic descent, shadowy as these may be?

He was fond of such proverbs and aphorisms as "noblesse oblige,"



THE PASQUIER PEDIGREE.

"bon sang ne sait mentir," "bon chien chasse de race," etc., and had even invented a little aphorism of his own, to comfort him when he was extra hard up, "bon gentilhomme n'a jamais honte de la misère." All of which sayings, to do him justice, he reserved for home consumption exclusively, and he would have been the first to laugh on hearing them in the mouth of any one else.

Of his one great gift, the treasure in his throat, he thought absolutely nothing at all.

"Ce que c'est que de nous!"

Gogo was colouring the quarterings of the Pasquier family—*la maison de Pasquier*, as it was called—in a printed book (*Armorial*

Général du Maine et de l'Anjou), according to the instructions that were given underneath. He used one of Madame Liard's three-sou boxes, and the tints left much to be desired.

We looked over his shoulder and read the picturesque old jargon, which sounds even prettier and more comforting and more idiotic in French than in English. It ran thus:—

"Pasquier (branche des Seigneurs de la Marière et du Hirel), party de 4 pièces et coupé de 2.

"Au premier, de Hérault, qui est écartelé de gueules et d'argent.

"Au deux, de Budes, qui est d'or au pin de sinople.

"Au trois, d'Aubéry—qui est d'azur à trois croissants d'argent.

"Au quatre, de Busson, qui est d'argent au lyon de sable armé couronné et lampassé d'or." And so on, through the other quarterings: Bigot, Epinay, Malestroît, Mathefelon. And finally, "Sur le tout, de Pasquier qui est d'or à trois lyons d'azur, au franc quartier écartelé des royaumes de Castille et de Léon."

Presently my mother came home from the English chapel in the Rue Marbrœuf, where she had been with Sarah, the English maid. Lunch was announced, and we were left alone with the family papers. With infinite precautions, for fear of blurring the dream, we were able to find what we wanted to find—namely, that we were the great-great-grandchildren and only possible living descendants of Gatienné, the fair glassmaker and composer of "*Le Chant du Triste Commensal*."

Thus runs the descent:—

Jean Aubéry, Seigneur du Brail, married Anne Busson. His daughter, Gatienné Aubéry, Dame du Brail, married Mathurin Budes, Seigneur de Verny le Moustier et de Monhoudéard.

Anne Budes, Dame de Verny le Moustier, married Guy Hérault, Comte de Boismorinel.

Jeanne Françoise Hérault de Boismorinel married François Pasquier de la Marière.

Jean Pasquier de la Marière married Catharine Ibbetson-Biddulph.

Pierre Pasquier de la Marière (*alias* Peter Ibbetson, convict).

Jeanne Budes, Dame du Brail et de Monhoudéard, married Ulric Seraskier.

Otto Seraskier, violinist, married Teresa Pulci.

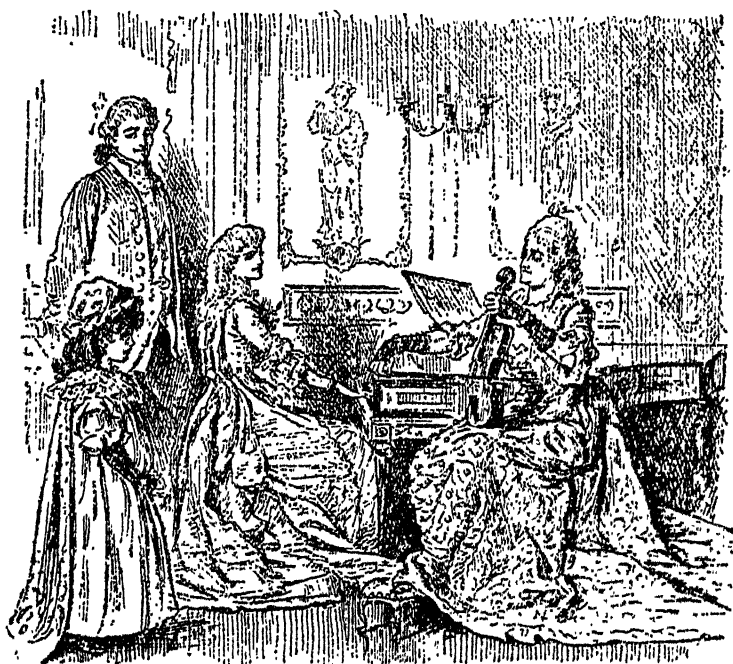
Johann Seraskier, M.D., married Laura Desmond.

Mary Seraskier, Duchess of Towers.

We walked back to "*Magna sed Apta*" in great joy, and there we celebrated our newly-discovered kinship by a simple repast, out of my *répertoire* this time. It consisted of oysters from Rules's in Maiden Lane, when they were sixpence a dozen, and bottled stout (*l'eau m'en vient à la bouche*); and we spent the rest of the hours allotted to us that night in evolving such visions as we could from the old tune "*Le Chant du Triste Commensal*," with varying success;

she humming it, accompanying herself on the piano, in her masterly, musician-like way, with one hand, and seeing all that I saw by holding my hand with the other.

By slow degrees the scenes and people evoked grew less dim, and whenever the splendid and important lady, whom we soon identified for certain as Gatienne, our common great-great-grand-mother, appeared—“le belle verrière de Verny le Moustier”—she



LA BELLE VERRIÈRE.

was more distinct than the others; no doubt because we both had part and parcel in her individuality, and also because her individuality was so strongly marked.

And before I was called away at the inexorable hour, we had the supreme satisfaction of seeing her play the fiddle to a shadowy company of patched and powdered and bewigged ladies and gentlemen, who seemed to take much sympathetic delight in her performance, and actually, even, of just hearing the thin unearthly tones of that most original and exquisite melody, “Le Chant du Triste Commensal,” to a quite inaudible accompaniment on the spinet by her daughter, evidently Anne Hérault, Comtesse de Boismorinel (*née* Budes), while the small child Jeanne de Boismorinel (afterward Dame Pasquier de la Marière) listened with dreamy rapture.

And just as Mary had said, she played her fiddle with its body

downward, and resting on her knees, as though it had been an undersized 'cello. I then vaguely remembered having dreamed of such a figure when a small child.

Within twenty-four hours of this strange adventure the practical and business-like Mary had started, in the flesh and with her maid, for that part of France where these, my ancestors, had lived, and within a fortnight she had made herself mistress of all my French family history, and had visited such of the different houses of my kin as were still in existence.

The turreted castle of my childish dreams, which, with the adjacent glass-factory, was still called Verny le Moustier, was one of these. She found it in the possession of a certain Count Hector du Chamorin, whose grandfather had purchased it at the beginning of the century.

He had built an entirely new plant, and made it one of the first glass-factories in Western France. But the old turreted *corps de logis* still remained, and his foreman lived there with his wife and family. The *pigeonnier* had been pulled down to make room for a shed with a steam-engine, and the whole aspect of the place was revolutionised; but the stream and watermill (the latter a mere picturesque ruin) were still there; the stream was, however, little more than a ditch, some ten feet deep and twenty broad, with a fringe of gnarled and twisted willows and alders, many of them dead.

It was called "Le Brail," and had given its name to my great-great-grandmother's property, whence it has issued thirty miles away (and many hundred years ago); but the old Château du Brail, the manor of the Aubérys, had become a farmhouse.

The Château de la Marière, in its walled park, and with its beautiful, tall, hexagonal tower, dated 1550, and visible for miles around, was now a prosperous cider brewery; it is still, and lies on the high-road from Angers to Le Mans.

The old forest of Boismorinel that had once belonged to the family of Hérault was still in existence; charcoal burners were to be found in its depths, and a stray roebuck or two; but no more wolves and wild-boars as in the olden time. And where the old castle had been now stood the new railway station of Boismorinel et Saint Maixent.

Most of such Budes, Bussons, Héraults, Aubérys, and Pasquiers, as were still to be found in the country, probably distant kinsmen of Mary's and mine, were lawyers, doctors, or priests, or had gone into trade and become respectably uninteresting; such as they were, they would scarcely have cared to claim kinship with such as I.

But a hundred years ago and more these were names of importance in Maine and Anjou; their bearers were descended for the most part from younger branches of houses which in the Middle Ages had intermarried with all there was of the best in France,

and although they were looked down upon by the *noblesse* of the court and Versailles, as were all the provincial nobility, they held their own well in their own country; feasting, hunting, and shooting with each other; dancing and fiddling and making love and intermarrying; and blowing glass, and growing richer and richer, till the Revolution came and blew them and their glass into space, and with them many greater than themselves, but few better. And all record of them and of their doings, pleasant and genial people as they were, is lost, and can only be recalled by a dream.

Verny le Moustier was not the least interesting of these old manors.

It had been built three hundred years ago, on the site of a still older monastery (whence its name); the ruined walls of the old abbey were (and are) still extant in the house garden, covered with apricot and pear and peach trees which had been sown or planted by our common ancestress when she was a bride.

Count Hector, who took a great pleasure in explaining all the past history of the place to Mary, had built himself a fine new house in what remained of the old park, and a quarter of a mile away from the old manor-house. Every room of the latter was shown to her; old wood panels still remained, prettily painted in a bygone fashion; old documents, and parchment deeds, and leases concerning fishponds, farms, and the like, were brought out for her inspection, signed by my grandfather Pasquier, my great-grandfather Bois-morinel, and our great-great-grandmother and her husband, Mathurin Budes, the lord of Verny le Moustier; and the tradition of Gaienne, *la belle Verrière* (also nicknamed *la reine de Hongrie*, it seems), still lingered in the county; and many old people still remembered, more or less correctly, "Le Chant du Triste Commencal" which a hundred years ago had been in everybody's mouth.

She was said to have been the tallest and handsomest woman in Anjou, of an imperious will and very masculine character, but immensely popular among rich and poor alike; of indomitable energy, and with a finger in every pie; but always more for the good of others than her own—a typical, managing, business-like Frenchwoman, and an exquisite musician to boot.

Such was our common ancestress, from whom, no doubt, we drew our love of music and our strange, almost hysterical susceptibility to the power of sound; from whom had issued those two born nightingales of our race—Seraskier, the violinist, and my father, the singer. And strange to say, her eyebrows met at the bridge of her nose, just like mine—and from under them beamed the luminous, black-fringed, gray-blue eyes of Mary, that suffered eclipse whenever their owners laughed or smiled!

During this interesting journey of Mary's in the flesh, we met every night at "Magna sed Apta" in the spirit, as usual; and I was made to participate in every incident of it.

We sat by the magic window, and had for our entertainment,

now the Verrerie de Verny le Moustier in its present state, all full of modern life, colour, and sound, steam and gas, as she had seen it a few hours before; now the old château as it was a hundred years ago; dim and indistinct, as though seen by near-sighted eyes at the close of a gray misty afternoon in late autumn through a blurred window-pane, with busy but silent shadows moving about—silent, because at first we could not hear their speech; it was too thin for our mortal ears, even in this dream within our dream! Only



OUR GREAT-GREAT-GRANDMOTHER.

Gatienne, the authoritative and commanding Gatienne, was faintly audible.

Then we would go down and mix with them. Thus, at one moment, we would be in the midst of a charming old-fashioned French family group of shadows: Gatienne, with her lovely twin-daughters Jeanne and Anne, and her gardeners round her, all training young peach and apricot trees against what still remained of the ancient buttresses and walls of the Abbaye de Verny le Moustier—all this more than a hundred years ago—the pale sun of a long-past noon casting the fainter shadows of these faint shadows on the shadowy garden-path.

Then, presto! Changing the scene as one changes a slide in a magic-lantern, we would skip a century, and behold!

Another French family group, equally charming, on the self-same spot, but in the garb of to-day, and no longer shadowy or mute by any means. Little trees have grown big; big trees have disappeared to make place for industrious workshops and machinery; but the old abbey walls have been respected, and gay, genial father, and handsome mother, and lovely daughters, all pressing on "*la belle Duchesse Anglaise*" peaches and apricots of her great-great-grandmother's growing.

For this amiable family of the Chamorin became devoted to Mary in a very short time—that is, the very moment they first saw her; and she never forgot their kindness, courtesy, and hospitality; they made her feel in five minutes as though she had known them for many years.

I may as well state here that a few months later she received from Mademoiselle du Chamorin (with a charming letter) the identical violin that had once belonged to *la belle Verrière*, and which Count Hector had found in the possession of an old farmer—the great-grandson of Gatienné's coachman—and had purchased, that he might present it as a New Year's gift to her descendant, the Duchess of Towers.

It is now mine, alas! I cannot play it; but it amuses and comforts me to hold in my hand, when broad and wide awake, an instrument that Mary and I have so often heard and seen in our dream, and which has so often rung in bygone days with the strange melody that has had so great an influence on our lives. Its aspect, shape, and colour, every mark and stain of it, were familiar to us before we had ever seen it with the bodily eye, or handled it with the hand of flesh. It thus came straight to us out of the dim and distant past, heralded by the ghost of itself!

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To return. Gradually, by practice and the concentration of our united will, the old-time figures grew to gain substance and colour, and their voices became perceptible; till at length there arrived a day when we could move among them, and hear them and see them as distinctly as we could our own immediate progenitors close by—as Gogo and Mimsey, as Monsieur le Major, and the rest.

The child who went about hand in hand with the white-haired lady (whose hair was only powdered) and fed the pigeons was my grandmother, Jeanne de Boismorinel (who married François Pasquier de la Marière). It was her father who wore red heels to his shoes, and made her believe she could manufacture little cocked hats in coloured glass; she had lived again in me whenever, as a child, I had dreamed that exquisite dream.

I could now evoke her at will; and, with her, many buried memories were called out of nothingness into life.

Among other wonderful things, I heard the redheaded gentleman, M. de Boismorinel (my great-grandfather), sing beautiful old songs by Lulli and others to the spinet, which he played charmingly—a rare accomplishment in those days. And lo! these tunes were tunes that had risen oft and unbidden in my consciousness, and I had fondly imagined that I had composed them myself—little impromptus of my own. And lo, again! His voice, high, nasal, but very sympathetic and musical, was that never-still small voice that has been singing unremittingly for more than half a century in the unswept, ungarnished corner of my brain where all the cobwebs are.

And these cobwebs?

Well, I soon became aware, by deeply diving into my inner consciousness when awake and at my daily prison toil (which left the mind singularly clear and free), that I was full, quite full, of slight elusive reminiscences which were neither of my waking life nor of my dream life with Mary: reminiscences of sub-dreams during sleep, and belonging to the period of my childhood and early youth; sub-dreams which no doubt had been forgotten when I woke, at which time I could only remember the surface dreams that had just preceded my waking.

Ponds, rivers, bridges, roads and streams, avenues of trees, arbours, windmills and water-mills, corridors and rooms, church functions, village fairs, festivities, men and women and animals, all of another time and of a country where I had never set my foot, were familiar to my remembrance. I had but to dive deep enough into myself, and there they were; and when night came, and sleep, and “*Magna sed Apta*,” I could re-evoke them all, and make them real and complete for Mary and myself.

That these subtle reminiscences were true antenatal memories was soon proved by my excursions with Mary into the past; and her experience of such reminiscences, and their corroboration, were just as my own. We have heard and seen her grandfather play the “*Chant du Triste Commensal*” to crowded concert-rooms, applauded to the echo by men and women long-dead and buried and forgotten!

Now, I believe such reminiscences to form part of the sub-consciousness of others, as well as Mary’s and mine, and that by perseverance in self-research many will succeed in reaching them—perhaps even more easily and completely than we have done.

It is something like listening for the overtones of a musical note; we do not hear them at first, though they are there, clamouring for recognition; and when at last we hear them, we wonder at our former obtuseness, so distinct are they.

Let a man with an average ear, however uncultivated, strike the C low down on a good pianoforte, keeping his foot on the loud pedal. At first he will hear nothing but the rich fundamental note C.

But let him become *expectant* of certain other notes; for instance,

of the C in the octave immediately above, then the G immediately above that, then the E higher still; he will hear them all in time as clearly as the note originally struck; and, finally, a shrill little ghostly and quite importunate D flat in the treble will pulsate so loudly in his ear, that he will never cease to hear it whenever that low C is sounded.

By just such a process, only with infinitely more pains (and in the end with what pleasure and surprise), will he grow aware in time of a dim, latent, antenatal experience that underlies his own personal experience of this life.

We also found that we were able not only to assist as mere spectators at such past scenes as I have described (and they were endless), but also to identify ourselves occasionally with the actors, and cease for the moment to be Mary Scorslier and Peter Hobetson. Notably was this the case with Gatienne. We could each be Gatienne for a space (though never both of us together), and when we resumed our own personality again we carried back with it a portion of hers, never to be lost again—a strange phenomenon, if the reader will but think of it, and constituting the germ of a comparative personal immortality on earth.

At my work in prison, even, I could distinctly remember having been Gatienne; so that for the time being, Gatienne, a provincial Frenchwoman who lived a hundred years ago, was contentedly undergoing penal servitude in an English jail during the latter half of the nineteenth century.

A questionable privilege, perhaps.

But to make up for it, when she was not alive in me she could be brought to life in Mary (only in one at a time, it seemed), and travel by rail and steamer, and know the uses of gas and electricity, and read the telegrams of "our special correspondents" in the *Times*, and taste her nineteenth century under more favourable conditions.

Thus we took *la belle Verrière* by turns, and she saw and heard things she little dreamed of a hundred years ago. Besides, she was made to share in the glories of "*Magna sed Aptc.*"

And the better we knew her the more we loved her; she was a very nice person to descend from, and Mary and I were well agreed that we could not have chosen a better great-great-grandmother, and wondered what each of our seven others was like, for we had fifteen of these between us, and as many great-great-grandfathers.

Thirty great-great-grandfathers and great-great-grandmothers had made us what we were; it was no good fighting against them and the millions at their backs.

Which of them all, strong, but gentle and shy, and hating the very sight of blood, yet saw scarlet when he was roused, and thirsted for the blood of his foe?

Which of them all, passionate and tender, but proud, high-minded, and chaste, and with the world at her feet, was yet ready to "throw

her cap over the windmills," and give up all for love, deeming the world well lost?

* * * * *

That we could have thus identified ourselves, only more easily and thoroughly, with our own more immediate progenitors, we felt certain enough. But after mature thought we resolved to desist from any further attempt at such transfusion of identity, for sacred reasons of discretion which the reader will appreciate.

But that this will be done some day (now the way has been made clear), and also that the inconveniences and possible abuses of such a faculty will be obviated or minimised by the ever-active ingenuity of mankind, is to my mind a foregone conclusion.

It is too valuable a faculty to be left in abeyance, and I leave the probable and possible consequences of its culture to the reader's imagination—merely pointing out to him (as an inducement to cultivate that faculty in himself) that if anything can keep us well within the thorny path that leads to happiness and virtue, it is the certainty that those who come after us will remember having been ourselves, if only in a dream—even as the newly-hatched chicken has remembered in its egg the use of eyes and ears and the rest, out of the fulness of its long antenatal experience; and, more fortunate than the helpless human infant in this respect, can enter on the business and pleasures of its brief, irresponsible existence at once!

* * * * *

Wherefore, O reader, if you be but sound in mind and body, it most seriously behoves you (not only for the sake of those who come after you, but your own) to go forth and multiply exceedingly, to marry early and much and often, and to select the very best of your kind in the opposite sex for this most precious, excellent, and blessed purpose; that all your future reincarnations (and hers), however brief, may be many; and bring you not only joy and peace and pleasurable wonderment and recreation, but the priceless guerdon of well-earned self-approval!

For whoever remembers having once been you, wakes you for the nonce out of—nirvana, shall we say? His strength, his beauty, and his wit are yours; and the felicity he derives from them in this earthly life is for you to share, whenever this subtle remembrance of you stirs in his consciousness; and you can never quite sink back again into—nirvana, till all your future wakers shall cease to be!

It is like a little old-fashioned French game we used to play at Passy, and which is not bad for a dark rainy afternoon: people sit all round in a circle, and each hands on to his neighbour a spill or a lucifer match just blown out, but in which a little live spark still lingers, saying, as he does so—

"Petit bonhomme vit encore!"

And he, in whose hand the spark becomes extinct, has to pay forfeit and retire—"Hélas! petit bonhomme n'est plus!... Pauv' petit bonhomme!"

Ever thus may a little live spark of your own individual consciousness, when the full, quick flame of your actual life here below is extinguished, be handed down mildly incandescent to your remotest posterity. May it never quite go out—it need not! May you ever be able to say of yourself, from generation to generation, "Petit bonhomme vit encore!" and still keep one finger at least in the pleasant earthly pie!

And, reader, remember so to order your life on earth that the memory of you (like that of Gatienne, la belle Verrière de Verny de Moustier) may smell sweet, and blossom in the dust—a memory pleasant to recall—to this end that its recallings and its recallers may be as numerous as filial love and ancestral pride can make them....

And oh! looking *backwards* (as *we* did), be tender to the failings of your forbears, who little guessed when alive that the secrets of their long-buried hearts should one day be revealed to *you*! Their faults are really your own, like the faults of your innocent, ignorant childhood, so to say, when you did not know better, as you do now; or will soon, thanks to

"Le Chant du Triste Commensal!"

* * * * *

Wherefore, also, beware and be warned in time, ye tenth transmitters of a foolish face, ye reckless begetters of diseased or puny bodies, with hearts and brains to match! Far down the corridors of time shall club-footed retribution follow in your footsteps, and overtake you at every turn! Most remorselessly, most vindictively, will you be aroused, in sleepless hours of unbearable misery (future-waking nightmares), from your false, uneasy dream of death; to participate in an inheritance of woe still worse than yours—worse with all the accumulated interest of long years and centuries of iniquitous self-indulgence, and poisoned by the sting of a self-reproach that shall never cease till the last of your tainted progeny dies out, and finds his true nirvana, and yours, in the dim, forgetful depths of interstellar space!

* * * * *

And here let me most conscientiously affirm that, partly from my keen sense of the solemnity of such an appeal, and the grave responsibility I take upon myself in making it; but more especially in order to impress you, O reader, with the full significance of this apocalyptic and somewhat minatory utterance (that it may haunt your finer sense during your midnight hours of introspective self-communion), I have done my best, my very best, to couch it in the obscurest and most unintelligible phraseology I could invent. If I have failed

to do this, if I have unintentionally made any part of my meaning clear, if I have once deviated by mistake into what might almost appear like sense—mere common sense—it is the fault of my half-French and wholly imperfect education. I am but a poor scribe!

.

Thus roughly have I tried to give an account of this, the most important of our joint discoveries in the strange new world revealed to us by chance. More than twenty years of our united lives have been devoted to the following out of this slender clue—with what surprising results will, I trust, be seen in subsequent volumes.

We have not had time to attempt the unravelling of our English ancestry as well—the Crays and the Desmonds, the Ibbetsons and Biddulphs, etc.—which connect us with the past history of England. The farther we got back into France, the more fascinating it became, and the easier—and the more difficult to leave.

What an unexampled experience has been ours! To think that we have seen—actually seen—*de nos propres yeux vu*—Napoleon Bonaparte himself, the arch-arbiter of the world, on the very pinnacle of his pride and power; in his little cocked hat and gray double-breasted overcoat, astride his white charger, with all his staff around him, just as he has been so often painted! Surely the most impressive, unforgettable, ineffaceable little figure in all modern history, and clothed in the most cunningly imagined make-up that ever theatrical costumier devised to catch the public eye and haunt the public memory for ages and ages yet to come!

It is a singularly new, piquant, and exciting sensation to stare in person, and as in the present, at bygone actualities, and be able to foretell the past and remember the future all in one!

To think that we have even beheld him before he was First Consul—slim and pale, his lank hair dangling down his neck and cheeks, if possible more impressive still! as innocent as a child of all that lay before him! Europe at his feet—the throne—Waterloo—St. Helena—the Iron English Duke—the pinnacle turned into a pillory so soon!

“O corse à cheveux plats, que la France était belle
Au grand soleil de Messidor!”

.

And Mirabeau and Robespierre, and Danton and Marat and Charlotte Corday! we have seen them too; and Marie Antoinette and the fishwives and “the beautiful head of Lamballe” (on its pike!) . . . and watched the tumbrils go by to the *Place du Carrousel*, and gazed at the guillotine by moonlight—silent and terror-stricken, our very hearts in our mouths. . . .

And in the midst of it all, ridiculous stray memories of Madame Tussaud would come stealing into our ghastly dream of blood and

retribution, mixing up past and present and future in a manner not to be described, and making us smile through our tears!

Then we were present (several times!) at the taking of the Bastille, and indeed witnessed most of the stormy scenes of that stormy time, with our Carlyle in our hands; and often have we thought, and with many a hearty laugh, what fun it must be to write immortal histories, with never an eye-witness to contradict you!

And going farther back we have haunted Versailles in the days of its splendour, and drunk our fill of all the glories of the court of Louis XIV!

What imposing ceremonials, what stupendous royal functions have we not attended—where all the beauty, wit, and chivalry of France, prostrate with reverence and awe (as in the very presence of a god), did loyal homage to the greatest monarch this world has ever seen—while we sat by, on the very steps of his throne, as he solemnly gave out his royal command! and laughed aloud under his very nose—the shallow, silly, pompous little snob—and longed to pull it! and tried to disinfect his greasy, civet-scented, full-bottomed wig with wholesome whiffs from a nineteenth-century regalia!

Nothing of that foolish but fascinating period escaped us. Town, hamlet, river, forest, and field; royal palace, princely castle, and starving peasants' hut; pulpit, stage, and salon; port, camp, and market-place; tribunal and university; factory, shop, studio, smithy; tavern and gambling-hell and den of thieves; convent and jail, torture-chamber and gibbet-close, and what not all!

And at every successive step our once desponding, over-anxious, over-burthened latter-day souls have swelled with joy and pride and hope at the triumphs of our own day all along the line! Yea, even though we have heard the illustrious Bossuet preach, and applauded Molière in one of his own plays, and gazed at and listened to (and almost forgiven) Racine and Corneille, and Boileau, and Fénelon, and the good Lafontaine—those five ruthless persecutors of our own innocent French childhood!

And, still ascending the stream of time, we have hobnobbed with Montaigne and Rabelais, and been personally bored by Malherbe, and sat at Ronsard's feet, and ridden by Froissart's side, and slummed with François Villon—in what enchanted slums!.....

François Villon! Think of that, ye fond British bards and bardlets of to-day—ye would-be translators and imitators of that never-to-be-translated, never-to-be-imitated lament, the immortal *Ballade des Dames du Temps jadis*!

And while I speak of it, I may as well mention that we have seen them too, or some of them—those fair ladies *he* had never seen, and who had already melted away before his coming, like the snows of yesteryear, *les neiges d'antan*! Bertha, with the big feet; Joan of Arc, the good Lorrainer (what would she think of her native province now?); the very learned Héloïse, for love of whom one Peter Esbaillart, or Abélard (a more luckless Peter than even I!), suffered such cruel

indignities at monkish hands; and that haughty, naughty queen, her Tower of Nesle,

“ Qui commanda que Buridan
Fut jecté en ung Sac en Seine.... ”

Yes, we have seen them with the eye, and heard them speak and sing, and scold and jest, and laugh and weep, and even pray! And I have sketched them, as you shall see some day, good reader! And let me tell you that their beauty was by no means maddening; the standard of female loveliness has gone up, even in France! Even *la très sage Héloïs* was scarcely worth such a sacrifice as—but there! Possess your soul in patience; all that, and it is all but endless, will appear in due time, with such descriptions and illustrations as I flatter myself the world has never bargained for, and will value as it has never valued any historical records yet!

Day after day, for more than twenty years, Mary has kept a voluminous diary (in a cipher known to us both); it is now my property, and in it every detail of our long journey into the past has been set down.

Contemporaneously, day by day (during the leisure accorded to me by the kindness of Governor ——), I have drawn over again from memory the sketches of people and places I was able to make straight from nature during those wonderful nights at “Magna sed Apta.” I can guarantee the correctness of them, and the fidelity of the likenesses; no doubt their execution leaves much to be desired.

Both her task and mine (to the future publication of which this autobiography is but an introduction) have been performed with the minutest care and conscientiousness; no time or trouble has been spared. For instance, the Massacre of St. Bartholomew alone, which we were able to study from seventeen different points of view, cost us no less than two months’ unremitting labour.

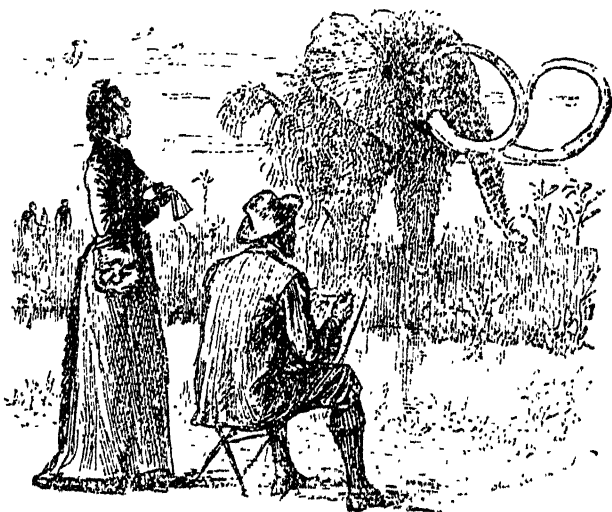
As we reached farther and farther back through the stream of time, the task became easier in a way; but we have had to generalise more, and often, for want of time and space, to use types in lieu of individuals. For with every successive generation the number of our progenitors increased in geometrical progression (as in the problem of the nails in the horseshoe), until a limit of numbers was reached—namely, the sum of the inhabitants of the terrestrial globe. In the seventh century there was not a person living in France (not to mention Europe) who was not in the line of our direct ancestry, excepting, of course, those who had died without issue and were mere collaterals.

We have even just been able to see, as in a glass darkly, the faint shadows of the Mammoth and the cave bear, and of the man who hunted and killed and ate them, that he might live and prevail.

The Mammoth!

We have walked round him and under him as he browsed, and

even *through* him where he lay and rested, as one walks through the dun mist in a little hollow on a still, damp morning; and turning round to look (at the proper distance) there was the unmistakable shape again, just thick enough to blot out the lines of the dim primeval landscape beyond, and make a hole in the blank sky. A dread silhouette, thrilling our hearts with awe—blurred and indistinct like a composite photograph—merely the *type*, as it had been seen generally by all who had ever seen it at all, every one of whom



THE MAMMOTH.

(*exceptis excipiendis*) was necessarily an ancestor of ours, and of every man now living.

There it stood or reclined, the monster, like the phantom of an overgrown hairy elephant; we could almost see, or fancy we saw, the expression of his dull cold antediluvian eye—almost perceive a suggestion of russet-brown in his fell.

Mary firmly believed that we should have got in time to our hairy ancestor with pointed ears and a tail, and have been able to ascertain whether he was arboreal in his habits or not. With what passionate interest she would have followed and studied and described him! And I! With what eager joy, and yet with what filial reverence, I would have sketched his likeness—with what conscientious fidelity as far as my poor powers would allow! (For all we know to the contrary he may have been the most attractive and engaging little beast that ever was, and far less humiliating to descend from than many a titled yahoo of the present day.)

Fate, alas, has willed that it should be otherwise, and on others, duly trained, must devolve the delightful task of following up the clue we have been so fortunate as to discover.

And now the time has come for me to tell as quickly as I may the story of my bereavement—a bereavement so immense that no man, living or dead, can ever have experienced the like; and to explain how it is that I have not only survived it and kept my wits (which some people seem to doubt), but am here calmly and cheerfully writing my reminiscences, just as if I were a famous Academician, actor, novelist, statesman, or general diner-out—blandly garrulous and well satisfied with myself and the world.

During the latter years of our joint existence, Mary and I, engrossed by our fascinating journey through the centuries, had seen little or nothing of each other's outer lives, or rather I had seen nothing of hers (for she still came back sometimes with me to my jail); I only saw her as she chose to appear in our dream.

Perhaps at the bottom of this there may have been a feminine dislike on her part to be seen growing older, for at "*Magna sed Apta*" we were always twenty-eight or thereabouts—at our very best. We had truly discovered the fountain of perennial youth, and had drunk thereof! And in our dream we always felt even younger than we looked; we had the buoyancy of children and their freshness.

Often had we talked of death and separation and the mystery beyond, but only as people do for whom such contingencies are remote; yet in reality time flew as rapidly for us as for others, although we were less sensible of its flight.

There came a day when Mary's exuberant vitality, so constantly overtaxed, broke down, and she was ill for a while; although that did not prevent our meeting as usual, and there was no perceptible difference in her when we met. But I am certain that in reality she was never quite the same again as she had been, and the dread possibility of parting any day would come up oftener in our talk; in our minds, only too often, and our minds were as one.

She knew that if I died first, everything I had brought into "*Magna sed Apta*" (and little it was) would be there no more; even to my body, ever lying supine on the couch by the enchanted window, if she had woke by chance to our common life before I had, or remained after I had been summoned away to my jail.

And I knew that, if she died, not only her body on the adjacent couch, but all "*Magna sed Apta*" itself would melt away, and be as if it had never been, with its endless galleries and gardens and magic windows, and all the wonders it contained.

Sometimes I felt a hideous nervous dread, on sinking into sleep, lest I should find it was so, and the ever-heavenly delight of waking there, and finding all as usual, was but the keener. I would kneel by her inanimate body, and gaze at her with a passion of love that seemed made up of all the different kinds of love a human being can feel; even the love of a dog for his mistress was in it, and that of a wild beast for its young.

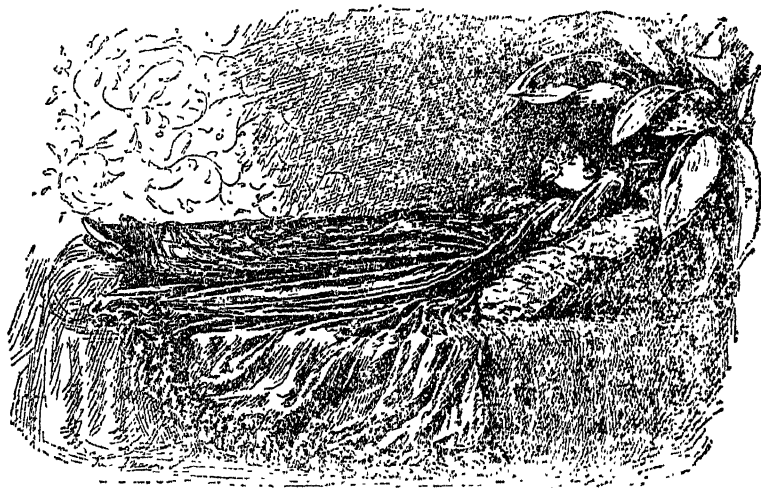
With eager, tremulous anxiety and aching suspense I would watch for the first light breath from her lips, the first faint tinge of carmine

in her cheek, that always heralded her coming back to life. And when she opened her eyes and smiled, and stretched her long young limbs in the joy of waking, what transports of gratitude and relief!

Ah me! the recollection!

At last a terrible unforgettable night arrived when my presentiment was fulfilled.

I awoke in the little lumber-room of "Parva sed Apta," where the door had always been that led to and from our palace of delight; but there was no door any longer—nothing but a blank wall....



WAITING.

I woke back at once in my cell, in such a state as it is impossible to describe. I felt there must be some mistake, and after much time and effort was able to sink into sleep again, but with the same result: the blank wall, the certainty that "Magna sed Apta" was closed for ever, that Mary was dead; and then the terrible jump back into my prison life again.

This happened several times during the night, and when the morning dawned I was a raving madman. I took the warder who first came (attracted by my cries of "Mary!") for Colonel Ibbetson, and tried to kill him, and should have done so, but that he was a very big man, almost as powerful as myself and only half my age.

Other warders came to the rescue, and I took them all for Ibbetsons and fought like the maniac I was.

When I came to myself, after long horrors and brain-fever and what not, I was removed from the jail infirmary to another place, where I am now.

I had suddenly recovered my reason, and woke to mental agony such as I, who had stood in the dock and been condemned to a shameful death, had never even dreamed of.

I soon had the knowledge of my loss confirmed, and heard (it had been common talk for more than nine days) that the famous Mary, Duchess of Towers, had met her death at the ——— station of the Metropolitan Railway.

A woman, carrying a child, had been jostled by a tipsy man just as a train was entering the station, and dropped her child on to the metals. She tried to jump after it but was held back, and Mary, who had just come up, jumped in her stead, and by a miracle of strength and agility was just able to clutch the child and get on to the six-foot way as the engine came by.

She was able to carry the child to the end of the train, and was helped on to the platform. It was her train, and she got into a carriage, but she was dead before it reached the next station. Her heart (which, it seems, had been diseased for some time) had stopped, and all was over.

So died Mary Seraskier, at fifty-three.

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I lay for many weeks convalescent in body, but in a state of dumb, dry, tearless despair, to which there never came a moment's relief, except in the dreamless sleep I got from chloral, which was given to me in large quantities—and then, the *waking*!

I never spoke nor answered a question, and hardly ever stirred. I had one fixed idea—that of self-destruction; and after two unsuccessful attempts, I was so closely bound and watched night and day that any further attempt was impossible. They would not trust me with a toothpick or a button or a piece of common pack-thread.

I tried to starve myself to death and refused all solid food; but an intolerable thirst (perhaps artificially brought on) made it impossible for me to refuse any liquid that was offered, and I was tempted with milk, beef-tea, port, and sherry, and these kept me alive....

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I had lost all wish to dream.

At length, one afternoon, a strange, inexplicable, overwhelming nostalgic desire came over me to see once more the Mare d'Auteuil—only once; to walk thither for the last time through the Chasussée de la Muette, and by the fortifications.

It grew upon me till it became a torture to wait for bedtime, so frantic was my impatience.

When the long-wished-for hour arrived at last, I laid myself down once more (as nearly as I could for my bonds) in the old position I had not tried for so long; my will intent upon the Porte de la Muette, an old stone gateway that separated the Grande Rue de Passy from the entrance to the Bois de Boulogne—a kind of Temple Bar.

It was pulled down forty-five years ago.

I soon found myself there, just where the Grande Rue meets the Rue de la Pompe, and went through the arch and looked toward the Bois.

It was a dull, leaden day in autumn; few people were about, but a gay *repas de nocés* was being held at a little restaurant on my right-hand side. It was to celebrate the wedding of Achille Grigoux, the greengrocer, with Félicité Lenormand, who had been the Seraskiers' housemaid. I suddenly remembered all this, and that Mimsey and Gogo were of the party—the latter, indeed, being *premier garçon d'honneur*, on whom would soon devolve the duty of stealing the bride's garter, and cutting it up into little bits to adorn the buttonholes of the male guests before the ball began.

In an archway on my left some forlorn, worn-out old rips, broken-kneed and broken-winded, were patiently waiting, ready saddled and bridled, to be hired—Chloris, Murat, Rigolette, and others: I knew and had ridden them all nearly half a century ago. Poor old shadows of the long-dead past, so lifelike and real and pathetic—it "split me the heart" to see them!

A handsome young blue-coated, silver-buttoned courier, of the name of Lami, came trotting along from St. Cloud on a roan horse, with a great jingling of his horse's bells and clacking of his short-handled whip. He stopped at the restaurant and called for a glass of white wine, and, rising in his stirrups, shouted gaily for Monsieur et Madame Grigoux. They appeared at the first-floor window, looking very happy, and he drank their health, and they his. I could see Gogo and Mimsey in the crowd behind them, and mildly wondered again, as I so often had wondered before, how I came to see it all from the outside—from another point of view than Gogo's.

Then the courier bowed gallantly, and said, "*Bonne chance!*" and went trotting down the Grande Rue on his way to the Tuileries, and the wedding guests began to sing: they sang a song beginning—

"Il était un petit navire
Qui n'avait jamais navigué...."

I had quite forgotten it, and listened till the end, and thought it very pretty; and was interested in a dull, mechanical way at discovering that it must be the original of Thackeray's famous ballad of "Little Billee," which I did not hear till many years after.

When they came to the last verse—

"Si cette histoire vous embête,
Nous allons la recommencer,"

I went on my way. This was my last walk in dreamland, perhaps, and dream-hours are uncertain, and I would make the most of them, and look about me.

I walked toward Ranelagh, a kind of casino, where they used to give balls and theatrical performances on Sunday and Thursday

nights (and where afterward Rossini spent the latter years of his life; then it was pulled down, I am told, to make room for many smart little villas).

In the meadow opposite M. Erard's park, Saindou's schoolboys were playing rounders—*la balle au camp*—from which I concluded



A VOT' SANTÉ.

it was a Thursday afternoon, a half-holiday; if they had had clean shirts on (which they had not) it would have been Sunday, and the holiday a whole one.

I knew them all, and the two *pions*, or ushers, M. Lartigue and *le petit Cazal*; but no longer cared for them or found them amusing or interesting in the least.

Opposite the Ranelagh a few old hackney coachmen were pacifically killing time by a game of *bouchon*—knocking sous off a cork with other sous—great fat sous and double sous long gone out of fashion.

It is a very good game, and I watched it for a while, and envied the long-dead players.

Close by was a small wooden shed, or *baraque*, prettily painted and glazed, and ornamented at the top with little tricolour flags; it belonged to a couple of old ladies, Mère Manette and Grandmère Manette—the two oldest women ever seen. They were very keen about business, and would not give credit for a centime—not even to English boys. They were said to be immensely rich and quite alone in the world. How very dead they must be now! I thought. And I gazed at them and wondered at their liveliness and the pleasure they took in living. They sold many things: nougat, *pain d'épices*, mirlitons, hoops, drums, noisy battledores, and shuttlecocks; and little ten-sou hand-mirrors, neatly bound in zinc, that could open and shut.

I looked at myself in one of these that was hanging outside; I was old and worn and gray—my face badly shaven—my hair almost white. I had never been old in a dream before.

I walked through the gate in the fortifications on to the outer Talus (which was quite bare in those days), in the direction of the Mare d'Auteuil. The place seemed very deserted and dull for a Thursday. It was a sad and sober walk; my melancholy was not to be borne—my heart was utterly broken, and my body so tired I could scarcely drag myself along. Never before had I known in a dream what it was to be tired.

I gazed at the famous fortifications in all their brand-new pinkness, the scaffoldings barely removed—some of them still lying in the dry ditch between—and smiled to think how little these brick and granite walls would avail to keep the Germans out of Paris thirty years later (twenty years ago). I tried to throw a stone across a narrow part, and found I could no longer throw stones; so I sat down and rested. How thin my legs were! and how miserably clad—in old prison trousers, greasy, stained, and frayed, and ignobly kneed—and what boots!

Never had I been shabby in a dream before.

Why could not I, once for all, walk round to the other side, and take a header *à la hussarde* off those lofty bulwarks, and kill myself for good and all? Alas! I should only blur the dream, and perhaps even wake in my miserable strait-waistcoat. And I wanted to see the *mare* once more, very badly.

This set me thinking. I would fill my pockets with stones, and throw myself into the Mare d'Auteuil after I had taken a last good look at it, and around. Perhaps the shock of emotion, in my present state of weakness, might really kill me in my sleep. Who knows? it was worth trying, anyhow.

I got up and dragged myself to the *mare*. It was deserted but for one solitary female figure, soberly clad in black and gray, that sat motionless on the bench by the old willow.

I walked slowly round in her direction, picking up stones and

putting them into my pockets, and saw that she was gray-haired and middle-aged, with very dark eyebrows, and extremely tall, and that her magnificent eyes were following me.

Then, as I drew nearer, she smiled and showed gleaming white teeth, and her eyes crinkled and nearly closed up as she did so.

"Oh, my God!" I shrieked; "it is Mary Seraskier!"

I ran to her—I threw myself at her feet, and buried my face in



I SAT DOWN AND RESTED.

her lap, and there I sobbed like a hysterical child, while she tried to soothe me as one soothes a child.

After a while I looked up into her face. It was old and worn and gray, and her hair nearly white, like mine. I had never seen her like that before; she had always been eight-and-twenty. But age became her well—she looked so benignly beautiful and calm and grand that I was awed—and quick, chill waves went down my backbone.

Her dress and bonnet were old and shabby; her gloves had been mended—old kid gloves with fur about the wrists. She drew them off, and took my hands and made me sit beside her, and looked at me for a while with all her might in silence.

At length she said: "Gogo mio, I know all you have been through by the touch of your hands. Does the touch of mine tell you nothing?"

It told me nothing but her huge love for me, which was all I cared for, and I said so.

She sighed, and said: "I was afraid it would be like this. The old circuit is broken, and can't be restored—not yet!"

We tried again hard; but it was useless.

She looked round and about and up at the treetops, everywhere; and then at me again, with great wistfulness, and shivered, and finally began to speak; with hesitation at first, and in a manner foreign to her. But soon she became apparently herself, and found her old swift smile and laugh, her happy slight shrugs and gestures, and quaint polyglot colloquialisms (which I omit, as I cannot always spell them); her homely, simple ways of speech, her fluent, magnetic energy, the winning and sympathetic modulations of her voice,



"IT IS MARY SERASKIER!"

its quick humorous changes from grave to gay—all that made everything she said so suggestive of all she wanted to say besides.

"Gogo, I knew you would come. I *wished* it! How dreadfully you have suffered! How thin you are! It shocks me to see you! But that will not be any more; we are going to change all that.

"Gogo, you have no idea how difficult it has been for me to come back, even for a few short hours, for I can't hold on very long. It is like hanging on to the window-sill by one's wrists. This time it is Hero swimming to Leander, or Juliet climbing up to Romeo.

"Nobody has ever come back before.

"I am but a poor husk of my former self, put together at great pains for you to know me by. I could not make myself again what I have always been to you. I had to be content with this, and so must

you. These are the clothes I died in. But you knew me directly, dear Gogo.

"I have come a long way—such a long way—to have an *abboccamento* with you. I had so many things to say. And now we are both here, hand in hand as we used to be, I can't even understand what they were; and if I could, I couldn't make you understand. But you will know some day, and there is no hurry whatever.

"Every thought you have had since I died, I know already; your share of the circuit is unbroken at least. I know now why you picked up those stones and put them in your pockets. You must never think of *that* again—you never will. Besides, it would be of no use, poor Gogo!"

Then she looked up at the sky and all round her again, and smiled in her old happy manner, and rubbed her eyes with the backs of her hands, and seemed to settle herself for a good long talk—an *abboccamento*!

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Of all she said I can only give a few fragments—whatever I can recall and understand when awake. Wherever I have forgotten I will put a line of little dots. Only when I sleep and dream can I recall and understand the rest. It seems all very simple then. I often say to myself, "I will fix it well in my mind, and put it into well-chosen words—*her* words—and learn them by heart; and then wake cautiously and remember them, and write them all down in a book, so that they shall do for others all they have done for me, and turn doubt into happy certainty, and despair into patience and hope and high elation."

But the bell rings and I wake, and my memory plays me false. Nothing remains but the knowledge *that all will be well for us all, and of such a kind that those who do not sigh for the moon will be well content.*

Alas, this knowledge: I cannot impart it to others. Like many who have lived before me, I cannot prove—I can only affirm....

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"How odd and old-fashioned it feels," she began, "to have eyes and ears again, and all that—little open windows on to what is near us. They are very clumsy contrivances! I had already forgotten them.

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"Look, there goes our old friend, the water-rat, under the bank—the old fat father—*le bon gros père*—as we used to call him. He is only a little flat picture moving upside down in the opposite direction across the backs of our eyes, and the farther he goes the smaller he seems. A couple of hundred yards off we shouldn't see him at all. As it is, we can only see the outside of him, and that only on one side at a time; and yet he is full of important and wonderful things

that have taken millions of years to make—like us! And to see him at all we have to look straight at him—and then we can't see what's behind us or around—and if it was dark we couldn't see anything whatever.

"Poor eyes! Little bags full of water, with a little magnifying-glass inside, and a nasturtium leaf behind—to catch the light and feel it!

"A celebrated German oculist once told papa that if his instrument-maker were to send him such an ill-made machine as a human eye, he would send it back and refuse to pay the bill. I can understand that now; and yet on earth where should we be without eyes? And afterward where should we be if some of us hadn't once had them on earth?

"I can hear your dear voice, Gogo, with both ears. Why two ears? Why only two? What you want, or think, or feel, you try to tell me in sounds that you have been taught—English, French. If I didn't know English and French, it would be no good whatever. Language is a poor thing. You fill your lungs with wind and shake a little slit in your throat, and make mouths, and that shakes the air; and the air shakes a pair of little drums in my head—a very complicated arrangement, with lots of little bones behind—and my brain seizes your meaning in the rough. What a roundabout way, and what a waste of time!

"And so with all the rest. We can't even smell straight! A dog would laugh at us—not that even a dog knows much!

"And feeling! We can feel too hot or too cold, and it sometimes makes us ill, or even kills us. But we can't feel the coming storm, or which is north and south, or where the new moon is, or the sun at midnight, or the stars at noon, or even what o'clock it is by our own measurement. We cannot even find our way home blindfolded—not even a pigeon can do that, nor a swallow, nor an owl! Only a mole, or a blind man, perhaps, feebly groping with a stick, if he has already been that way before.

"And taste! It is well said there's no accounting for it.

"And then, to keep all this going, we have to eat, and drink, and sleep, and all the rest. What a burden!

"And you and I are the only mortals that I know of who ever found a way to each other's inner being by the touch of the hands. And then we had to go to sleep first. Our bodies were miles apart; not that *that* would have made any difference, for we could never have done it waking—never; not if we had hugged each other to extinction!

"Gogo, I cannot find any words to tell you *how*, for there are none in any language that I ever knew to tell it; but where I am it is all ear and eye and the rest in *one*, and there is, oh, how much more besides! Things a homing-pigeon has known, and an ant, and a mole, and a water-beetle, and an earthworm, and a leaf, and a root, and a magnet—even a lump of chalk, and more. One can see and smell and touch and taste a sound, as well as hear it, and *vice versâ*. It is very simple, though it may not seem so to you now.

"And the sounds! Ah, what sounds! The thick atmosphere of earth is no conductor for such as *they*, and earthly ear-drums no receiver. Sound is everything. Sound and light are one.

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"And what does it all mean?

"I knew what it meant when I was there—part of it, at least—and shall know again in a few hours. But this poor old earth-brain of mine, which I have had to put on once more as an old woman puts on a nightcap, is like my eyes and ears. It can now only understand what is of the earth—what you can understand, Gogo, who are still of the earth. I forget, as one forgets an ordinary dream, as one sometimes forgets the answer to a riddle, or the last verse of a song. It is on the tip of the tongue; but there it sticks, and won't come any farther.

"Remember, it is only in your brain I am living now—your earthly brain, that has been my only home for so many happy years, as mine has been yours.

"How we have nestled!

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"But this I know: one must have had them all once—brains, ears, eyes, and the rest—on earth. 'Il faut avoir passé par là!' or no after-existence for man or beast would be possible or even conceivable.

"One cannot teach a born deaf-mute how to understand a musical score, nor a born blind man how to feel colour. To Beethoven, who had once heard with the ear, his deafness made no difference, nor their blindness to Homer and Milton.

"Can you make out my little parable?

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"Sound and light and heat, and electricity, and motion, and will and thought and remembrance, and love and hate and pity, and the desire to be born and to live, and the longing of all things alive and dead to get rear each other, or to fly apart—and lots of other things besides! All that comes to the same—'C'est comme qui dirait bonnet blanc et blanc bonnet,' as Monsieur le Major used to say. 'C'est simple comme bonjour!'

"Where I am, Gogo, I can hear the sun shining on the earth and making the flowers blow, and the birds sing, and the bells peal for

birth and marriage and death—happy, happy death, if you only knew—‘*C’est la clef des champs!*’

“It shines on moons and planets, and I can hear it, and hear the echo they give back again. The very stars are singing; rather a long way off! but it is well worth their while with such an audience as lies between us and them; and they can’t help it. . . .

“I can’t hear it here—not a bit—now that I’ve got my ears on; besides, the winds of the earth are too loud. . . .

“Ah, that is music, if you like; but men and women are stone deaf to it—their ears are in the way! . . .

“Those poor unseen flatfish that live in the darkness and mud at the bottom of deep seas can’t catch the music men and women make upon the earth—such poor music as it is! But if ever so faint a murmur, borne on the wings and fins of a sunbeam, reaches them for a few minutes at mid-day, and they have a speck of marrow in their spines to feel it, and no ears or eyes to come between, they are better off than any man, Gogo. Their dull existence is more blessed than his.

“But alas for them, as yet! They haven’t got the memory of the eye and ear, and without that no speck of spinal marrow will avail; they must be content to wait, like you. . . .

“The blind and deaf?

“Oh yes; *là-bas*, it is all right for the poor deafmutes and born blind of the earth; they can remember with the past eyes and ears of all the rest. Besides, it is no longer *they*. There is no *they*! That is only a detail.

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“You must try and realise that it is just as though all space between us and the sun and stars were full of little specks of spinal marrow, much too small to be seen in any microscope—smaller than anything in the world. All space is full of them, shoulder to shoulder—almost as close as sardines in a box—and there is still room for more! Yet a single drop of water would hold them all, and not be the less transparent. They all remember having been alive on earth or elsewhere, in some form or other, and each knows all the others remember. I can only compare it to that.

“Once all that space was only full of stones, rushing, whirling, meeting, and crushing together, and melting and steaming in the white-heat of their own hurry. But now there’s a crop of something better than stones, I can promise you! It goes on gathering, and being garnered and mingled and sifted and winnowed—the precious, indestructible harvest of how many millions of years of life!

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“And this I know: the longer and more strenuously and completely one lives one’s life on earth, the better for all. It is the foundation of everything. Though if men could guess what is in store for

them when they die, without also knowing *that*, they would not have the patience to live—they wouldn't wait! For who would fardels bear? They would just put stones in their pockets, as you did, and make for the nearest pond.

"They mustn't!

"Nothing is lost—nothing! From the ineffable, high, fleeting thought a Shakespeare can't find words to express, to the slightest sensation of an earthworm—nothing! Not a leaf's feeling of the light, not a loadstone's sense of the pole, not a single volcanic or electric thrill of the mother earth.

"All knowledge must begin on earth for *us*. It is the most favoured planet in this poor system of ours just now, and for a few short millions of years to come. There are just a couple of others, perhaps three; but they are not of great consequence. 'Il y fait trop chaud—ou pas assez!' They are failures.

"The sun, the father sun, *le bon gros père*, rains life on to the mother earth. A poor little life it was at first, as you know—grasses and moss, and little wriggling, transparent things—all stomach; it is quite true! That is what we come from—Shakespeare, and you, and I!

"After each individual death the earth retains each individual clay to be used again and again; and, as far as I can see, it rains back each individual essence to the sun—or somewhere near it—like a precious waterdrop returned to the sea, where it mingles, after having been about and seen something of the world, and learned the use of five small wits—and remembering all! Yes, like that poor little exiled wandering waterdrop in the pretty song your father used to sing, and which always manages to find its home at last—

"Va' passaggier in fiume,
Va' prigionier in fonte,
Ma sempre ritorn' al mar.

"Or else it is as if little grains of salt were being showered into the Mare d'Auteuil, to melt and mingle with the water and each other till the Mare d'Auteuil itself was as salt as salt can be.

"Not till that Mare d'Auteuil of the sun is saturated with the salt of the earth, of earthly life and knowledge, will the purpose be complete, and then old Mother Earth may well dry up into a cinder like the moon; its occupation will be gone, like hers—'adieu, panier, les vendanges sont faites!'

"And as for the sun and its surrounding ocean of life—a^h—is beyond *me*! but the sun will dry up, too, and its ocean doubt be drawn to other greater suns. For everything ;

on more or less in the same way, only crescendo, everywhere and for ever.

"You must understand that it is not a bit like an ocean, nor a bit like water-drops, or grains of salt, or specks of spinal marrow; but it is only by such poor metaphors that I can give you a glimpse of what I mean, since you can no longer understand me, as you used to do on earthly things, by the mere touch of our hands.

"Gogo, I am the only little water-drop, the one grain of salt that has not yet been able to dissolve and melt away in that universal sea; I am the exception.

"It is as though a long invisible chain bound me still to the earth, and I were hung at the other end of it in a little transparent locket, a kind of cage, which lets me see and hear things all round, but keeps me from melting away.

"And soon I found that this locket was made of that half of you that is still in me, so that I couldn't dissolve, because half of me wasn't dead at all; for the chain linked me to that half of myself I had left in you, so that half of me actually wasn't there to be dissolved. . . . I am getting rather mixed!

"But oh, my heart's true love, how I hugged my chain, with you at the other end of it!

"With such pain and effort as you cannot conceive, I have crept along it back to you, like a spider on an endless thread of its own spinning. Such love as mine is stronger than death indeed!

"I have come to tell you that we are inseparable for ever, you and I, one double speck of spinal marrow—"Philipschen!" one little grain of salt, one drop. There is to be no parting for us—I can see that; but such extraordinary luck seems reserved for you and me alone up to now; and it is all our own doing.

"But not till you join me shall you and I be complete, and free to melt away in that universal ocean, and take our part, as One, in all that is to be.

"That moment—you must not hasten it by a moment. Time is nothing. I'm even beginning to believe there's no such thing; there is so little difference, ~~is there~~ between a year and a day. And as for things, an inch is as good as an ell!

Things cannot be measured like that.

"A midge's life is as long as man's, for it has time to learn its business, and do all the harm it can, and fight, and make love, and marry, and reproduce its kind, and grow disenchanted and bored and sick and content to die—all in a summer after-noon. An average man can live to seventy years without doing much more.

"And then there are tall midges and clever and good-looking ones,

and midges of great personal strength and cunning, who can fly a little faster and a little farther than the rest, and live an hour longer to drink a whole drop more of some other creature's blood; but it does not make a very great difference!

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"No, time and space mean just the same as 'nothing.'"

"But for you they mean much, as you have much to do. Our joint life must be revealed—that long, sweet life of make-believe, that has been so much more real than reality. Ah, where and what were time or space to us then?"

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"And you must tell all we have found out, and how; the way must be shown to others with better brains and better training than we had. The value to mankind—to mankind here and hereafter—may be incalculable.

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"For some day, when all is found out that can be found out on earth, and made the common property of all (or even before that), the great man will perhaps arise and make the great guess that is to set us all free, here and hereafter. Who knows?"

"I feel this splendid guesser will be some inspired musician of the future, as simple as a little child in all things but his knowledge of the power of sound; but even little children will have learned much in those days. He will want new notes and find them—new notes between the black and white keys. He will go blind like Milton and Homer, and deaf like Beethoven; and then, all in the stillness and the dark, all in the depths of his forlorn and lonely soul, he will make his best music, and out of the endless mazes of its counterpoint he will evolve a secret, as we did from the "*Chant du Triste Comensal*," but it will be a greater secret than ours. Others will have been very near this hidden treasure; but he will happen right on it, and unearth it, and bring it to light. "I think I see him sitting at the keyboard, so familiar of old to the feel of his consummate fingers; painfully dictating his score to some most patient and devoted friend—mother, sister, daughter, wife—that score that he will never see or hear.

"What a stammerer! Not only blind and deaf, but *mad*—mad in the world's eyes, for fifty, a hundred, a thousand years. Time is nothing; but that score will survive....

"He will die of it, of course; and when he dies and comes to us, there will be joy from here to Sirius, and beyond.

"And one day they will find out on earth that he was only deaf and blind—not mad at all. They will hear and *understand*—they will know that he saw and heard as none had ever heard or seen before!

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"For 'as we sow we reap'; that is a true saying, and all the sowing is done here on earth, and the reaping beyond. Man is a grub; his dead clay, as he lies confined in his grave, is the left-off cocoon he has spun for himself during his earthly life, to burst open and soar from with all his memories about him, even his lost ones. Like the dragonfly, the butterfly, the moth.... and when *they* die it is the same, and the same with a blade of grass. We are all, *tous tant que nous sommes*, little bags of remembrance that never dies; that's what we're *for*. But we can only bring with us to the common stock what we've got. As Père Fran ois used to say, 'La plus belle fille au monde ne peut donner que ce qu'elle a.'

"Besides all this I am your earthly wife, Gogo—your loving, faithful, devoted wife, and I wish it to be known.

"And then at last, in the fulness of time—a very few years—ah, then——

"Once more shall Neuha lead her Torquil by the hand...."

"O Mary!" I cried, "shall we be transcendently happy again? As happy as we were—*happier* even?"

"Ah, Gogo, is a man happier than a mouse, or a mouse than a turnip, or a turnip than a lump of chalk? But what man would be a mouse or a turnip, or *vice versa*? what turnip would be a lump—of anything but itself? Are two people happier than one? You and I, yes; because we *are* one; but who else? It is one and all. Happiness is like time and space—we make and measure it ourselves; it is a fancy—as big, as little, as you please; just a thing of contrasts and comparisons, like health or strength or beauty or any other good—that wouldn't even be noticed but for sad personal experience of its opposite!—or its greater!

"I have forgotten all I know but this, which is for you and me: we are inseparable for ever. Be sure we shall not want to go back again for a moment."

"And is there no punishment or reward?"

"Oh, there again! What a detail! Poor little naughty perverse midges—who were *born* so—and *can't* keep straight! poor little exemplary midges who couldn't go wrong if they tried! Is it worth while? Isn't it enough for either punishment or reward that the secrets of all midges' hearts shall be revealed, and for all other midges to see? Think of it!

"There are battles to be fought and races to be won, but no longer against '*each other*.' And strength and swiftness to win them; but no longer any strong and swift. There is weakness and cowardice, but no longer any cowards or weaklings. The good and the bad

and the worst and the best—it is all mixed up. But the good comes to the top; the bad goes to the bottom—it is precipitated, as papa used to say. It is not an agreeable sediment, with its once useful cruelty at the lowest bottom of all—out of sight, out of mind—all but forgotten. *C'est déjà le ciel.*

* * * * *

“And the goal? The cause, the whither and the why of it all? Ah! Gogo—as inscrutable, as unthinkable as ever, till the great guesser comes! At least so it seems to me, speaking as a fool, out of the depths of my poor ignorance; for I am a new arrival, and a complete outsider, with my chain and locket, waiting for you.

“I have only picked up a few grains of sand on the shore of that sea—a few little shells, and I can’t even show you what they are like. I see that it is no good even talking of it, alas! And I had promised myself *so* much.

“Oh! how my earthly education was neglected, and yours! and how I feel it now, with so much to say in words, mere words! Why, to tell you in words the little I can see, the very little—so that you could understand—would require that each of us should be the greatest poet and the greatest mathematician that ever were, rolled into one! How I pity you, Gogo—with your untrained, unskilled, innocent pen, poor scribe! having to write all this down—for you *must*—and do your poor little best, as I have done mine in telling you! You must let the heart speak, and not mind style or manner! Write *anyhow*! write for the greatest need and the greatest number.

“But do just try and see this, dearest, and make the best of it you can: as far as *I* can make it out, everything everywhere seems to be an ever-deepening, ever-broadening stream that makes with inconceivable velocity for its own proper level, WHERE PERFECTION IS!.... and ever gets nearer and nearer, and never finds it, and fortunately never will!

“Only that, unlike an earthly stream, and more like a fresh flowing tide up an endless, boundless, shoreless creek (if you can imagine that), the level it seeks is immeasurably higher than its source. And everywhere in it is Life, Life, Life! ever renewing and doubling itself, and ever swelling that mighty river which has no banks!

“And everywhere in it, like begets like, *plus* a little better or a little worse; and the little worse finds its way into some backwater and sticks there, and finally goes to the bottom, and nobody cares. And the little better goes on bettering and bettering—not all man’s folly or perverseness can hinder *that*, nor make that headlong torrent stay, or ebb, or roll backwards for a moment—*c’est plus fort que nous*!.... The record goes on beating itself, the high-water mark gets higher and higher till the highest on earth is reached that can be—and then, I suppose, the earth grows cold and the sun goes out—to be broken up into bits, and used all over again, perhaps! And betterness flies to warmer climes and huger systems, to better itself

still! And so on, from better to better, from higher to higher, from warmer to warmer, and bigger to bigger—for ever and ever and ever!

"But the final superlative of all, absolute all-goodness and all-highness, absolute all-wisdom, absolute omnipotence, beyond which there neither is nor can be anything more, will never be reached at all—since there are no such things; they are abstractions; besides which attainment means rest, and rest stagnation, and stagnation an end of all! And there is no end, and never can be—no end to Time and all the things that are done in it—no end to Space and all the things that fill it, or all would come together in a heap and smash up in the middle—and there is no middle!—no end, no beginning, no middle! *no middle*, Gogo! think of *that*! it is the most inconceivable thing of all!!!

"So who shall say where Shakespeare and you and I come in—tiny links in an endless chain, so tiny that even Shakespeare is no bigger than we! And just a little way behind us, those little wriggling transparent things, all stomach, that we descend from; and far ahead of ourselves, but in the direct line of a long descent from us, an ever-growing conscious Power, so strong, so glad, so simple, so wise, so mild, and so beneficent, that what can we do, even now, but fall on our knees with our foreheads in the dust, and our hearts brimful of wonder, hope, and love, and tender shivering awe; and worship as a yet unborn, barely conceived, and scarce begotten *Child*—that which we have always been taught to worship as a *Father*—That which is not now, but *is* to be—That which we shall all share in and be part and parcel of in the dim future—That which is slowly, surely, painfully weaving Itself out of us and the likes of us all through the limitless Universe, and Whose coming we can but faintly foretell by the casting of its shadow on our own slowly, surely, painfully awakening souls!"

Then she went on to speak of earthly things, and ask questions in her old practical way. First of my bodily health, with the tenderest solicitude and the wisest advice—as a mother to a son. She even insisted on listening to my heart, like a doctor.

Then she spoke at great length of the charities in which she had been interested, and gave me many directions which I was to write, as coming from myself, to certain people whose names and addresses she impressed upon me with great care.

I have done as she wished, and most of these directions have been followed to the letter, with no little wonder on the world's part (as the world well knows) that such sagacious and useful reforms should have originated with the inmate of a criminal lunatic asylum.

At last the time came for us to part. She foresaw that I should have to wake in a few minutes, and said, rising—

"And now, Gogo, the best beloved that ever was on earth, take me once more in your dear arms, and kiss me good-bye for a little while—*auf wiedersehen*. Come here to rest and think and remember when your body sleeps. My spirit will always be here with you. I may even be able to come back again myself—just this poor husk of me—hardly more to look at than a bundle of old clothes; but yet a world made up of love for you. Good-bye, good-bye, dearest



"GOOD-BYE."

and best. Time is nothing, but I shall count the hours. Good-bye...."

Even as she strained me to her breast I awoke.

I awoke, and knew that the dread black shadow of melancholia had passed away from me like a hideous nightmare—like a long and horrible winter. My heart was full of the sunshine of spring—the gladness of awaking to a new life.

I smiled at my night attendant, who stared back at me in astonishment, and exclaimed—

"Why, sir, blest if you ain't a new man altogether. There, now!"

I wrung his hand, and thanked him for all his past patience, kindness, and forbearance with such effusion that his eyes had tears in them. I had not spoken for weeks, and he heard my voice for the first time.

That day, also, without any preamble or explanation, I gave the doctor and the chaplain and the governor my word of honour that I would not attempt my life again, or any one else's, and was believed and trusted on the spot; and they unstrapped me.

I was never so touched in my life.

In a week I recovered much of my strength; but I was an old man. That was a great change.

Most people age gradually and imperceptibly. To me old age had come of a sudden—in a night, as it were; but with it, and suddenly also, the resigned and cheerful acquiescence, the mild serenity, that are its compensation and more.

My hope, my certainty to be one with Mary some day—that is my heaven, my heaven—a consummation of completeness beyond which there is nothing to wish for or imagine. Come what else may, that is safe, and that is all I care for. She was able to care for me, and for many other things besides, and I love her all the more for it; but I can only care for *her*.

Sooner or later—a year—ten years; it does not matter much. I also am beginning to disbelieve in the existence of time.

That waking was the gladdest in my life—gladder even than the waking in my condemned cell the morning after my sentence of death, when another black shadow passed away—that of the scaffold.

O Mary! What has she not done for me—what clouds has she not dispelled!

When night came round again I made once more, step by step, the journey from the *Porte de la Muette* to the *Mare d'Auteuil*, with everything the same—the gay wedding-feast, the blue and silver courier, the merry guests singing.

“Il était un petit navire.”

Nothing was altered, even to the dull gray weather. But, oh, the difference to me!

I longed to play at *bouchon* with the hackney coachmen, or at *la balle au camp* with my old schoolfellows. I could have even waltzed with “Monsieur Lartigue” and “le petit Cazal.”

I looked in *Mère Manette*'s little mirror and saw my worn, gray, haggard, old face again; and liked it, and thought it quite good-looking. I sat down and rested by the fortifications as I had done the night before, for I was still tired, but with a most delicious fatigue; my very shabbiness was agreeable to me—*pauvre, mais honnête*. A convict, a madman, but a prince among men—still the beloved of Mary!

And when at last I reached the spot I had always loved the best on earth ever since I first saw it as a child, I fell on my knees and

wept for sheer excess of joy. It was mine indeed; it belonged to me as no land or water had ever belonged to any man before.

Mary was not there, of course; I did not expect her.

But, strange and incomprehensible as it seems, she had forgotten her gloves; she had left them behind her. One was on the bench, one was on the ground; poor old gloves that had been mended, with the wellknown shape of her dear hands in them; every fold and crease preserved as in a mould—the very cast of her finger-nails; and the scent of sandalwood she and her mother had so loved.

I laid them side by side, palms upward, on the bench where we had sat the night before. No dream-wind has blown them away; no dream-thief had stolen them; there they lie still, and will lie till the great change comes over me, and I am one with their owner.

* * * * *

I am there every night—in the lovely spring or autumn sunshine—meditating, remembering, taking notes—dream-notes to be learned by heart, and used next day for a real purpose.

I walk round and round, or sit on benches, or lie in the grass by the brink, and smoke cigarettes without end, and watch the old amphibious life I found so charming half a century ago, and find it charming still.

Sometimes I dive into the forest (which has now been razed to the ground. Ever since 1870 there is an open space all round the Mare d'Auteuil. I had seen it since then in a dream with Mary, who went to Paris after the war, and made pilgrimages by day to all the places so dear to our hearts, and so changed; and again, when the night came, with me for a fellow-pilgrim. It was a sad disenchantment for us both).

My Mare d'Auteuil, where I spend so many hours, is the Mare d'Auteuil of Louis Philippe, unchangeable except for such slight changes as *will* occur, now and then, between the years 1839 and 1846: a broken bench mended, a new barrier put up by the high-road, a small wooden dike where the brink is giving way.

And the thicket beside and behind it is dark and dense for miles, with many tall trees and a rich, tangled undergrowth.

There is a giant oak which it is difficult to find in that labyrinth (it now stands, for the world, alone in the open; an ornament to the Auteuil racecourse). I have often climbed it as a boy, with Mimsey and the rest; I cannot climb it now, but I love to lie on the grass in its shade, and dream in my dream there, shut in on all sides by fragrant, impenetrable verdure; with birds and bees and butterflies and dragonflies and strange beetles and little field-mice with bright eyes, and lithe spotted snakes and lively brown squirrels and beautiful green lizards, for my company. Now and then a gentle roebuck comes and feeds close by me without fear, and the mole throws up his little mound of earth and takes an airing.

It is a very charming solitude.

It amuses me to think by day, when broad awake in my sad English prison, and among my crazy peers, how this nightly umbrageous French solitude of mine, so many miles and years away, is not but a common, bare, wide, grassy plain, overlooked by a gaudy, beflagged grand stand. It is Sunday, let us say — and for all I know a great race may be going on—all Paris is there, rich and poor. Little red-legged soldiers, big blue-legged gendarmes, keep the course clear; the sun shines, the tricolour waves, the gay, familiar language makes the summer breeze musical. I daresay it is all very bright and animated, but the whole place rings with the vulgar din of the bookmakers, and the air is full of dust and foul



I AM THERE EVERY NIGHT.

with the scent of rank tobacco, the reek of struggling French humanity; and the gaunt Eiffel Tower looks down upon it all from the sky over Paris (so, at least, I am told) like a skeleton at a feast.

Then twilight comes, and the crowds have departed; on foot, on horseback, on bicycles and tricycles, in every kind of vehicle; many by the *chemin de fer de ceinture*, the Auteuil station of which is close by.... all is quiet and bare and dull.

Then down drops the silent night like a curtain, and beneath its friendly cover the strange transformation effects itself quickly, and all is made ready for *me*. The grand stand evaporates, the railway station melts into thin air; there is no more Eiffel Tower with its electric light! The sweet forest of fifty years ago rises suddenly out of the ground, and all the wild live things that once lived in it wake to their merry life again.

A quiet deep old pond in a past French forest, hallowed by such memories! What *can* be more enchanting? Oh, soft and sweet nostalgia, so soon to be relieved!

Up springs the mellow sun, the light of other days, to its appointed place in the heavens — zenith, or east or west, according to order. A light wind blows from the south — everything is properly disinfected, and made warm and bright and comfortable — and lo!

old Peter Ibbetson appears upon the scene, absolute monarch of all he surveys for the next hours — one whose right there are literally none to dispute.

I do not encourage noisy gatherings there as a rule, nor by the pond; I like to keep the sweet place pretty much to myself; there is no selfishness in this, for, I am really depriving nobody. Whoever comes there now, comes there nearly fifty years ago and does not know it; they must have all died long since.

Sometimes it is a *garde champêtre* in Louis Philippe's blue and silver, with his black pipe, his gaiters, his old flint gun, and his embroidered gamebag. He does well in the landscape.

Sometimes it is a pair of lovers, if they are goodlooking and well-behaved, or else the boys from Saindou's school to play fly the garter — *la raie*.

Sometimes it is Monsieur le Curé, peacefully conning his "Hours," as with slow and thoughtful step he paces round and round. I can now read his calm, benevolent face by the light of half a century's experience of life, and have learned to love that still, black, meditative aspect which I found so antipathetic as a small boy — *he* is no burner alive of little heretics! This world is big enough for us both — and so is the world to come! And he knows it. Now, at all events!

Sometimes even a couple of Prendergasts are admitted, or even three; they are not so bad, after all; they have the qualities of their faults, although you might not think it.

But very often the old beloved shades arrive with their fishing-nets, and their high spirits, and their ringing Anglo-French — Charlie, and Alfred, and Madge, and the rest, and the grinning, barking, gyrating Médor, who dives after stones.

Oh, how it does my heart good to see and hear them!

They make me feel like a grandfather. Even Monsieur le Major is younger than I — his mustache less white than mine. He only comes to my chin; but I look up to him still, and love and revere him as when I was a little child.

And Dr. Seraskier! I place myself between him and what he is looking at, so that he seems to be looking straight at me; but with a far-away look in his eyes, as is only natural. Presently something amuses him, and he smiles, and his eyes crinkle up as his daughter's used to do when she was a woman, and his majestic face becomes as that of an angel, like hers.

L'ange du sourire!

And my gay, young, light-hearted father, with his vivacity and rollicking laugh and eternal good humour! He is just like a boy to me now, le beau Pasquier! He has got a new sling of his own invention; he pulls it out of his pocket, and slings stones high over the tree-tops and far away out of sight — to the joy of himself and everybody else — and does not trouble much as to where they will fall.

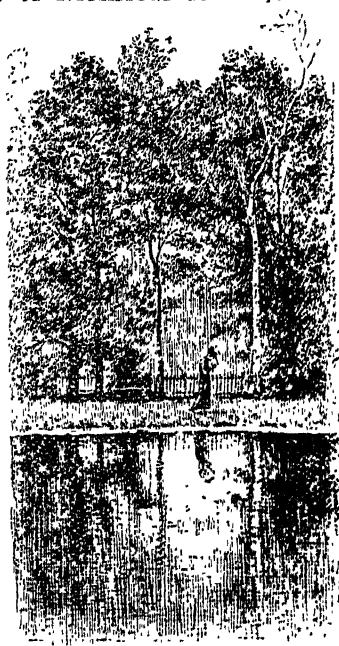
My mother is young enough now to be my daughter; it is as a

daughter, a sweet, kind, lovely daughter, that I love her now — a happily married daughter with a tall, handsome husband who yodles divinely and slings stones, and who has presented me with a grandson — *beau comme le jour* — for whatever Peter Ibbetson may have been in his time, there is no gainsaying the singular comeliness of little Gogo Pasquier.

And Mimsey is just a child angel! Monsieur le Major is infallible.

"Elle a toutes les intelligences de la tête et du cœur! Vous verrez un jour, quand ça ira mieux; vous verrez!"

That day had long come and gone; it is easy to see all that now — to have the eyes of Monsieur le Major.



THIS WORLD IS BIG ENOUGH FOR US BOTH.

Ah, poor little Mimsey, with her cropped head, and her pale face, and long, thin arms and legs, and grave, kind, luminous eyes, that have not yet learned to smile! What she is to *me*! ! !

And Madame Seraskier, in all the youthful bloom and splendour of her sacred beauty! A chosen lily among women — the mother of Mary!

She sits on the old bench by the willow, close to her daughter's gloves. Sometimes (a trivial and almost comic detail!) she actually seems to sit *upon* them, to my momentary distress; but when she goes away, there they are still, not flattened a bit — the precious mould of those beautiful, generous hands to which I owe everything here and hereafter.

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I have not been again to my old home. I dread the sight of the avenue. I cannot face "Parva sed Apta."

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But I have seen Mary again — seven times.

And every time she comes she brings a book with her, gilt-edged and bound in green morocco like the Byron we read when we were children, or in red morocco like the *Elegant Extracts* out of which we used to translate Gray's "Elegy," and the "Battle of Hohenlinden", and Cunningham's "Pastorals" into French.

Such is her fancy!

But inside these books are very different. They are printed in cipher, and in a language I can only understand in my dream. Nothing that I, or any one else, has ever read in any living book can approach, for interest and importance, what I read in these. There are seven of them.

I say to myself when I read them: it is perhaps well that I shall not remember this when I wake, after all!

For I might be indiscreet and injudicious, and either say too much or not enough; and the world might come to a standstill, all through me. For who would fardels bear, as Mary said! No! The world must be content to wait for the great guesser!

Thus my lips are sealed.

All I know is this: *that all will be well for us all, and of such a kind that all who do not sigh for the moon will be well content.*

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In such wise have I striven, with the best of my ability, to give some account of my two lives and Mary's. We have lived three lives between us — three lives in one.

It has been a happy task, however poorly performed, and all the conditions of its performance have been singularly happy also.

A cell in a criminal lunatic asylum! That does not sound like a bower in the Elysian Field! It is, and has been for me.

Besides the sun that lights and warms my inner life, I have been treated with a kindness and sympathy and consideration by everybody here, from the governor downward, that fills me with unspeakable gratitude.

Most especially do I feel grateful to my good friends, the doctor, the chaplain, and the priest — best and kindest of men — each of whom has made up his mind about everything in heaven and earth and below, and each in a contrary sense to the two others!

There is but one thing they are neither of them quite cocksure about, and that is whether I am mad or sane.

And there is one thing — the only one on which they are agreed; namely, that, mad or sane, I am a great undiscovered genius!

My little sketches, plain or coloured, fill them with admiration and ecstasy. Such boldness and facility of execution, such an overwhelming fertility in the choice of subjects, such singular realism

in the conception and rendering of past scenes, historical and otherwise, such astounding knowledge of architecture, character, costume, and what not: such local colour — it is all as if I had really been there to see!

I have the greatest difficulty in keeping my fame from spreading beyond the walls of the asylum. My modesty is as great as my talent!

No, I do not wish this great genius to be discovered just yet. It must all go to help and illustrate and adorn the work of a much greater genius, from which it has drawn every inspiration it ever had.

It is a splendid and delightful task I have before me: to unravel and translate and put in order these voluminous and hastily penned reminiscences of Mary's, all of them written in the cipher we invented together in our dream — a very transparent cipher when once you have got the key!

It will take five years at least, and I think that, without presumption, I can count on that, strong and active as I feel, and still so far from the age of the Psalmist.

First of all, I intend

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[*Note.* — Here ends my poor cousin's memoir. He was found dead from effusion of blood on the brain, with his pen still in his hand, and his head bowed down on his unfinished manuscript, on the margin of which he had just sketched a small boy wheeling a toy wheelbarrow full of stones from one open door to another. One door is labelled *Passé*, the other *Avenir*.

I arrived in England, after a long life spent abroad, at the time his death occurred, but too late to see him alive. I heard much about him and his latter days. All those whose duties brought them into contact with him seemed to have regarded him with a respect that bordered on veneration.

I had the melancholy satisfaction of seeing him in his coffin. I had not seen him since he was twelve years old.

As he lay there in his still length and breadth, he appeared gigantic — the most magnificent human being I ever beheld; and the splendour of his dead face will haunt my memory till I die.

MADGE PLUNKET.]



TRILBY

T

PART FIRST

'Mimi Pinson est une blonde,
Une blonde que l'on connaît;
Elle n'a qu'une robe au monde,
Landéirette! et qu'un bonnet!'

It was a fine, sunny, showery day in April.

The big studio window was open at the top, and let in a pleasant breeze from the north-west. Things were beginning to look ship-shape at last. The big piano, a semi-grand by Broadwood, had arrived from England by 'the Little Quickness' (*la Petite Vitesse*, as the goods trains are called in France), and lay, freshly tuned, alongside the eastern wall; on the wall opposite was a panoply of foils, masks, and boxing-gloves.

A trapeze, a knotted rope, and two parallel cords, supporting each a ring, depended from a huge beam in the ceiling. The walls were of the usual dull red, relieved by plaster casts of arms and legs and hands and feet; and Dante's mask, and Michael Angelo's *altorilievo* of Leda and the swan, and a centaur and Lapith from the Elgin Marbles—on none of these had the dust as yet had time to settle.

There were also studies in oil from the nude; copies of Titian, Rembrandt, Velasquez, Rubens, Tintoret, Leonardo da Vinci—none of the school of Botticelli, Mantegna, and Co.—a firm whose merits had not as yet been revealed to the many.

Along the walls, at a great height, ran a broad shelf, on which were other casts in plaster, terra-cotta, imitation bronze: a little Theseus, a little Venus of Milo, a little discobolus; a little flayed man threatening high heaven (an act that seemed almost pardonable under the circumstances!); a lion and a boar by Barye; an anatomical figure of a horse, with only one leg left and no ears; a horse's head from the pediment of the Parthenon, earless also; and the bust of Clytie, with her beautiful low brow, her sweet wan gaze, and the ineffable forward shrug of her dear shoulders that makes her bosom as a nest, a rest, a pillow, a refuge—the likeness of a thing to be loved and desired for ever, and sought for and wrought for and fought for by generation after generation of the sons of men.

Near the stove hung a gridiron, a frying-pan, a toasting fork, and a pair of bellows. In an adjoining glazed corner cupboard were plates and glasses, black-handled knives, pewter spoons, and three-pronged steel forks; a salad-bowl, vinegar cruets, an oil-flask, two mustard-pots (English and French), and such like things—all scrupulously clean. On the floor, which had been stained and waxed at considerable cost, lay two cheetah-skins and a large Persian praying-rug. One half of it, however (under the trapeze and at the

end farthest from the window, beyond the model-throne), was covered with coarse matting, that one might fence or box without slipping down and splitting one's self in two, or fall without breaking any bones.

Two other windows of the usual French size and pattern, with shutters to them and heavy curtains of baize, opened east and west, to let in dawn or sunset, as the case might be, or haply keep them out. And there were alcoves, recesses, irregularities, odd little nooks and corners, to be filled up as time wore on with endless personal nick-nacks, bibelots, private properties and acquisitions—things that make a place genial, homelike, and good to remember, and sweet to muse upon (with fond regret) in after years.

And an immense divan spread itself in width and length and delightful thickness just beneath the big north window, the business window—a divan so immense that three well-fed, well-contented Englishmen could all lie lazily smoking their pipes on it at once without being in each other's way, and very often did!

At present one of these Englishmen—a Yorkshireman, by the way, called Taffy (and also the Man of Blood, because he was supposed to be distantly related to a baronet)—was more energetically engaged. Bare-armed, and in his shirt and trousers, he was twirling a pair of Indian clubs round his head. His face was flushed, and he was perspiring freely and looked fierce. He was a very big young man, fair, with kind but choleric blue eyes, and the muscles of his brawny arm were strong as iron bands.



TAFFY, ALIAS TALBOT WYNNE

For three years he had borne Her Majesty's commission, and had been through the Crimean campaign without a scratch. He would have been one of the famous six hundred in the famous charge at Balaklava but for a sprained ankle (caught playing leapfrog in the trenches), which kept him in hospital on that momentous day. So that he lost his chance of glory or the grave, and this humiliating misadventure had sickened him of soldiering for life, and he never quite got over it. Then, feeling within himself an irresistible vocation for art, he had sold out; and here he was in Paris, hard at work, as we see.

He was good-looking, with straight features; but I regret to say that, besides his heavy plunger's moustache, he wore an immense pair of drooping auburn whiskers, of the kind that used to be called Piccadilly weepers, and were afterwards affected by Mr. Sothorn in Lord Dundreary. It was a fashion to do so then for such of our gilded youth as could afford the time (and the hair); the bigger and fairer the whiskers, the more beautiful was thought the youth! It

seems incredible in these days, when even Her Majesty's Household Brigade go about with smooth cheeks and lips, like priests or play-actors.

'What's become of all the gold
Used to hang and brush their bosoms . . .?'

Another inmate of this blissful abode—Sandy, the Laird of Cockpen, as he was called—sat in similarly simple attire at his easel, painting at a lifelike little picture of a Spanish toreador serenading a lady of high degree (in broad daylight). He had never been to Spain, but he had a complete toreador's kit—a bargain which he had picked up for a mere song in the Boulevard du Temple—and he had hired the guitar. His pipe was in his mouth—reversed; for it had gone out, and the ashes were spilled all over his trousers, where holes were often burned in this way.

Quite gratuitously, and with a pleasing Scotch accent, he began to declaim:

'A street there is in Paris famous
For which no rhyme our language yields;
Roo Nerve day Petty Shong its name is—
The New Street of the little Fields. . . .'

And then, in his keen appreciation of the immortal stanza, he chuckled audibly, with a face so blithe and merry and well pleased that it did one good to look at him.

He also had entered life by another door. His parents (good, pious people in Dundee) had intended that he should be a solicitor, as his father and grandfather had been before him. And here he was in Paris famous, painting toreadors, and spouting the 'Ballad of the Bouillabaisse', as he would often do out of sheer lightness of heart—much oftener, indeed, than he would say his prayers.

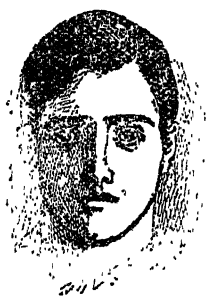
Kneeling on the divan, with his elbow on the windowsill, was a third and much younger youth. The third he was 'Little Billee'. He had pulled down the green baize blind, and was looking over the roofs and chimney-pots of Paris and all about with all his eyes, munching the while a roll and a savoury saveloy, in which there was evidence of much garlic. He ate with great relish, for he was very hungry; he had been all the morning at Carrel's studio, drawing from the life.

Little Billee was small and slender, about twenty or twenty-one, and had a straight white forehead veined with blue, large dark blue eyes, delicate, regular features, and coal-black hair. He was also very graceful and well built, with very small hands and feet, and much better dressed than his friends, who went out of their way to outdo the denizens of the Quartier Latin in careless eccentricity



'THE LAIRD OF COCKPEN'

of garb, and succeeded. And in his winning and handsome face there was just a faint suggestion of some possible very remote Jewish ancestor—just a tinge of that strong, sturdy, irrepressible, indomitable, indelible blood which is of such priceless value in diluted homœopathic doses, like the dry white Spanish wine called montijo, which is not meant to be taken pure; but without a judicious admixture of which no sherry can go round the world and keep its flavour intact; or like the famous bulldog strain, which is not beautiful



'THE THIRD HE WAS
'LITTLE BILLEE''

in itself, and yet just for lacking a little of the same no greyhound can ever hope to be a champion. So, at least, I have been told by wine merchants and dog-fanciers—the most veracious persons that can be. Fortunately for the world, and especially for ourselves, most of us have in our veins at least a minim of that precious fluid, whether we know it or show it or not. *Tant pis pour les autres!*

As Little Billee munched he also gazed at the busy place below—the Place St. Anatole des Arts—at the old houses opposite, some of which were being pulled down, no doubt lest they should fall of their own sweet will. In the gaps between he would see discoloured, old, cracked, dingy walls, with mysterious windows and rusty iron balconies of great antiquity—sights that set him dreaming dreams of medieval French love and wickedness and crime, bygone mysteries of Paris!

One gap went right through the block, and gave him a glimpse of the river, the 'Cité,' and the ominous old Morgue; a little to the right rose the gray towers of Notre Dame de Paris into the checkered April sky. Indeed, the top of nearly all Paris lay before him, with a little stretch of the imagination on his part; and he gazed with a sense of novelty, an interest and a pleasure for which he could not have found any expression in mere language.

Paris! Paris!! Paris!!!

The very name had always been one to conjure with, whether he thought of it as a mere sound on the lips and in the ear, or as a magical written or printed word for the eye. And here was the thing itself at last, and he, he himself, *ipsissimus*, in the very heart of it, to live there and learn there as long as he liked, and make himself the great artist he longed to be.

Then, his meal finished, he lit a pipe, and flung himself on the divan and sighed deeply, out of the over-full contentment of his heart.

He felt he had never known happiness like this, never even dreamed its possibility. And yet his life had been a happy one. He was young and tender, was Little Billee; he had never been to any school, and was innocent of the world and its wicked ways; innocent of French especially, and the ways of Paris and its Latin

Quarter. He had been brought up and educated at home, had spent his boyhood in London with his mother and sister, who now lived in Devonshire on somewhat straitened means. His father, who was dead, had been a clerk in the Treasury.

He and his two friends, Taffy and the Laird, had taken this studio together. The Laird slept there, in a small bedroom off the studio. Taffy had a bedroom at the Hotel de Seine, in the street of that name. Little Billee lodged at the Hotel Corneille, in the Place de l'Odéon.

He looked at his two friends, and wondered if any one, living or dead, had ever had such a glorious pair of chums as these.

Whatever they did, whatever they said, was simply perfect in his eyes; they were his guides and philosophers as well as his chums. On the other hand, Taffy and the Laird were as fond of the boy as they could be.

His absolute belief in all they said and did touched them none the less that they were conscious of its being somewhat in excess of their deserts. His almost girlish purity of mind amused and charmed them, and they did all they could to preserve it, even in the Quartier Latin, where purity is apt to go bad if it be kept too long.

They loved him for his affectionate disposition, his lively and caressing ways; and they admired him far more than he ever knew, for they recognised in him a quickness, a keenness, a delicacy of perception, in matters of form and colour, a mysterious facility and felicity of execution, a sense of all that was sweet and beautiful in nature, and a ready power of expressing it, that had not been vouchsafed to them in any such generous profusion, and which, as they ungrudgingly admitted to themselves and each other, amounted to true genius.

And when one within the immediate circle of our intimates is gifted in this abnormal fashion, we either hate or love him for it, in proportion to the greatness of his gift; according to the way we are built.

So Taffy and the Laird loved Little Billee—loved him very much indeed. Not but what Little Billee had his faults. For instance, he didn't interest himself very warmly in other people's pictures. He didn't seem to care for the Laird's guitar-playing toreador, nor for his serenaded lady—at all events, he never said anything about them, either in praise or blame. He looked at Taffy's realisms (for Taffy was a realist) in silence, and nothing tries true friendship so much as silence of this kind.

But, then, to make up for it, when they all three went to the Louvre, he didn't seem to trouble much about Titian either, or Rembrandt, or Velasquez, Rubens, Veronese, or Leonardo. He looked at the people who looked at the pictures, instead of at the pictures themselves; especially at the people who copied them, the sometimes charming young lady painters—and these seemed to him even more charming than they really were—and he looked a great deal out of the Louvre windows, where there was much to be seen: more Paris, for instance—Paris, of which he could never have enough.

But when, surfeited with classical beauty, they all three went and dined together, and Taffy and the Laird said beautiful things about the old masters, and quarrelled about them, he listened with deference and rapt attention and reverentially agreed with all they said; and afterwards made the most delightfully funny little pen-and-ink sketches of them, saying all these beautiful things (which he sent to his mother and sister at home); so lifelike, so real, that you could almost hear the beautiful things they said; so beautifully drawn that you felt the old masters couldn't have drawn them better themselves; and so irresistibly droll that you felt the old masters could not have drawn them at all—any more than Milton could have described the quarrel between Sairey Gamp and Betsy Prig; no one, in short, but Little Billee.

Little Billee took up the 'Ballad of the Bouillabaisse' where the Laird had left it off, and speculated on the future of himself and his friends, when he should have got to forty years—an almost impossibly remote future.

These speculations were interrupted by a loud knock at the door, and two men came in.

First, a tall bony individual of any age between thirty and forty-five, of Jewish aspect, well-featured but sinister. He was very shabby and dirty, and wore a red *béret* and a large velveteen cloak, with a big metal clasp at the collar. His thick, heavy, languid, lustreless black hair fell down behind his ears on to his shoulders, in that musicianlike way that is so offensive to the normal Englishman. He had bold, brilliant black eyes, with long heavy lids, a thin, sallow face, and a beard of burnt-up black, which grew almost from his under eyelids; and over it his moustache, a shade lighter, fell in two long spiral twists. He went by the name of Svengali, and spoke fluent French with a German accent and humorous German twists and idioms, and his voice was very thin and mean and harsh, and often broke into a disagreeable falsetto.

His companion was a little swarthy young man—a gypsy, possibly—much pitted with the smallpox, and also very shabby. He had large, soft, affectionate brown eyes, like a King Charles spaniel. He had small, nervous, veiny hands, with nails bitten down to the quick, and carried a fiddle and a fiddlestick under his arm, without a case, as though he had been playing in the street.

'Ponchour, mes enfants,' said Svengali. 'Che vous amène mon ami Checko, qui choue du fiolon comme un ane!'

Little Billee, who adored all 'sweet musicians', jumped up and made Gecko as warmly welcome as he could in his early French.

'Ha! le biâno!' exclaimed Svengali, flinging his red *béret* on it, and his cloak on the ground. 'Ch'espère qu'il est pon, et pien t'accord!'

And sitting down on the music-stool, he ran up and down the scales with that easy power, that smooth even crispness of touch, which reveal the master.

Then he fell to playing Chopin's impromptu in A flat, so beautifully that Little Billee's heart went nigh to bursting with suppressed emotion and delight. He had never heard any music of Chopin's before, nothing but British provincial home-made music—melodies with variations, 'Annic Laurie,' 'The Last Rose of Summer,' 'The Blue Bells of Scotland'; innocent little motherly and sisterly tinklings, invented to set the company at their ease on festive evenings, and make all-round conversation possible for shy people, who fear the unaccompanied sound of their own voices, and whose genial chatter always leaves off directly the music ceases.

He never forgot that impromptu, which he was destined to hear again one day in strange circumstances.

Then Svengali and Gecko made music together, divinely. Little fragmentary things, sometimes consisting of but a few bars, but these bars of *such* beauty and meaning! Scraps, snatches, short melodies, meant to fetch, to charm immediately, or to melt or sadden or madden just for a moment, and that knew just when to leave off—czardas, gypsy dances, Hungarian love-plaints, things little known out of eastern Europe in the fifties of this century, till the Laird and Taffy were almost as wild in their enthusiasm as Little Billee—a silent enthusiasm too deep for speech. And when these two great artists left off to smoke, the three Britishers were too much moved even for that, and there was a stillness. . . .

Suddenly there came a loud knuckle-rapping at the outer door, and a portentous voice of great volume, and that might almost have belonged to any sex (even an angel's), uttered the British milkman's yodel, 'Milk below!' and before any one could say 'Entrez,' a strange figure appeared, framed by the gloom of the little antechamber.

It was the figure of a very tall and fully-developed young female, clad in the gray overcoat of a French infantry soldier, continued netherwards by a short striped petticoat, beneath which were visible her bare white ankles and insteps, and slim, straight, rosy heels, clean cut and smooth as the back of a razor; her toes lost themselves in a huge pair of male slippers, which made her drag her feet as she walked.

She bore herself with easy, unembarrassed grace, like a person whose nerves and muscles are well in tune, whose spirits are high, who has lived much in the atmosphere of French studios, and feels at home in it.

This strange medley of garments was surmounted by a small bare head with short, thick, wavy brown hair, and a very healthy young face, which could scarcely be called quite beautiful at first sight, since the eyes were too wide apart, the mouth too large, the chin too massive, the complexion a mass of freckles. Besides, you can never tell how beautiful (or how ugly) a face may be till you have tried to draw it.

But a small portion of her neck, down by the collarbone, which just showed itself between the unbuttoned lapels of her military

coat collar, was of a delicate privet-like whiteness that is never to be found on any French neck, and very few English ones. Also, she had a very fine brow, broad and low, with thick level eyebrows much darker than her hair, a broad, bony, high bridge to her short



"WISTFUL AND SWEET"

nose, and her full, broad cheeks were beautifully modelled. She would have made a singularly handsome boy.

As the creature looked round at the assembled company and flashed her big white teeth at them in an all-embracing smile of uncommon width and quite irresistible sweetness, simplicity, and friendly trust, one saw at a glance that she was out of the common clever, simple, humorous, honest, brave, and kind, and accustomed

to be genially welcomed wherever she went. Then suddenly closing the door behind her, dropping her smile, and looking wistful and sweet, with her head on one side and her arms akimbo, 'Ye're all English, now, aren't ye?' she exclaimed. 'I heard the music, and thought I'd just come in for a bit, and pass the time of day: you don't mind? Trilby, that's my name—Trilby O'Ferrall.'

She said this in English, with an accent half Scotch and certain French intonations, and in a voice so rich and deep and full as almost to suggest an incipient *tenore robusto*; and one felt instinctively that it was a real pity she wasn't a boy, she would have made such a jolly one.

'We're delighted, on the contrary,' said Little Billee and advanced a chair for her.

But she said, 'Oh, don't mind me; go on with the music', and sat herself down cross-legged on the model-throne near the piano.

As they still looked at her, curious and half embarrassed, she pulled a paper parcel containing food out of one of the coat-pockets, and exclaimed:

'I'll just take a bite, if you don't object; I'm a model, you know, and it's just rung twelve—"the rest." I'm posing for Durien the sculptor, on the next floor. I pose to him for the altogether.'

'The altogether?' asked Little Billee.

'Yes—*l'ensemble*, you know—head, hands, and feet—everything—especially feet. That's my foot,' she said, kicking off her big slipper and stretching out the limb. 'It's the handsomest foot in all Paris. There's only one, in all Paris to match it, and here it is,' and she laughed heartily (like a merry peal of bells), and stuck out the other.

And in truth they were astonishingly beautiful feet, such as one only sees in pictures and statues—a true inspiration of shape and colour, all made up of delicate lengths and subtly-modulated curves and noble straightnesses and happy little dimpled arrangements in innocent young pink and white.

So that Little Billee, who had the quick, prehensile, aesthetic eye, and knew by the grace of Heaven what the shapes and sizes and colours of almost every bit of man, woman, or child should be (and so seldom are), was quite bewildered to find that a real, bare, live human foot could be such a charming object to look at, and felt that such a base or pedestal lent quite an antique and Olympian dignity to a figure that seemed just then rather grotesque in its mixed attire of military overcoat and female petticoat, and nothing else!

Poor Trilby!

The shape of those lovely slender feet (that were neither large nor small), facsimiled in dusty pale plaster of Paris, survives on the shelves and walls of many a studio throughout the world, and many a sculptor yet unborn has yet to marvel at their strange perfection, in studious despair.

For when Dame Nature takes it into her head to do her very best, and bestow her minutest attention on a mere detail, as happens now and then—once in a blue moon, perhaps—she makes it uphill work for poor human art to keep pace with her.

It is a wondrous thing, the human foot—like the human hand; even more so, perhaps; but, unlike the hand, with which we are so familiar, it is seldom a thing of beauty in civilised adults who go about in leather boots or shoes.

So that it is hidden away in disgrace, a thing to be thrust out of sight and forgotten. It can sometimes be very ugly indeed—the ugliest thing there is, even in the fairest and highest and most gifted of her sex; and then it is of an ugliness to chill and kill romance, and scatter love's young dream, and almost break the heart.

And all for the sake of a high heel and a ridiculously-pointed toe—mean things, at the best!

Conversely, when Mother Nature has taken extra pains in the building of it, and proper care or happy chance has kept it free of lamentable deformations, indurations, and discolorations—all those grewsome boot-begotten abominations which have made it so generally unpopular—the sudden sight of it, uncovered, comes as a very rare and singularly pleasing surprise to the eye that has learned how to see!

Nothing else that Mother Nature has to show, not even the human face divine, has more subtle power to suggest high physical distinction, happy evolution, and supreme development; the lordship of man over beast, the lordship of man over man, the lordship of woman over all!

En voilà de l'éloquence—à propos de bottes!

Trilby had respected Mother Nature's special gift to herself—had never worn a leather boot or shoe, had always taken as much care of her feet as many a fine lady takes of her hands. It was her one coquetry, the only real vanity she had.

Gecko, his fiddle in one hand and his bow in the other, stared at her in open-mouthed admiration and delight, as she ate her sandwich of soldier's bread and *fromage à la crème* quite unconcerned.

When she had finished she licked the tips of her fingers clean of cheese, and produced a small tobacco pouch from another military pocket, made herself a cigarette, and lit it and smoked it, inhaling the smoke in large whiffs, filling her lungs with it, and sending it back through her nostrils, with a look of great beatitude.

Svengali played Schubert's 'Rosamonde,' and flashed a pair of languishing black eyes at her with intent to kill.

But she didn't even look his way. She looked at Little Billee, at big Taffy, at the Laird, at the casts and studies, at the sky, the chimney-pots over the way, the towers of Notre Dame, just visible from where she sat.

Only when he finished she exclaimed: 'Maie, aïe! c'est rudement

bien tapé, c'te musique-là! Seulement, c'est pas gai, vous savez! Comment q'ça s'appelle?''

'It is called the "Rosemonde" of Schubert, matemoiselle,' replied Svengali. (I will translate.)

'And what's that—Rosemonde?' said she.

'Rosemonde was a princess of Cyprus, matemoiselle, and Cyprus is an island.'

'Ah, and Schubert, then—where's that?'

'Schubert is not an island, matemoiselle. Schubert was a compatriot of mine, and made music, and played the piano, just like me.'

'Ah, Schubert was a *monsieur*, then. Don't know him; never heard his name.'

'That is a pity, matemoiselle. He had some talent. You like this better, perhaps,' and he strummed,

'Messieurs les étudiants,
S'en vont à la chaumière
Pour y danser le cancan,'

striking wrong notes, and banging out a bass in a different key—a hideously grotesque performance.

'Yes, I like that better. It's gayer, you know. Is that also composed by a compatriot of yours?' asked the lady.

'Heaven forbid, matemoiselle.'

And the laugh was against Svengali.

But the real fun of it all (if there was any) lay in the fact that she was perfectly sincere.

'Are you fond of music?' asked Little Billee.

'Oh, ain't I just!' she replied. 'My father sang like a bird. He was a gentleman and a scholar, my father was. His name was Patrick Michael O'Ferrall, Fellow of Trinity, Cambridge. He used to sing "Ben Bolt." Do you know "Ben Bolt"?''

'Oh yes, I know it well,' said Little Billee. 'It's a very pretty song.'

'I can sing it,' said Miss O'Ferrall. 'Shall I?'

'Oh, certainly, if you will be so kind.'

Miss O'Ferrall threw away the end of her cigarette, put her hands on her knees as she sat cross-legged on the model-throne, and sticking her elbows well out, she looked up to the ceiling with a tender, sentimental smile, and sang the touching song,

'Oh, don't you remember sweet Alice, Ben Bolt?
Sweet Alice, with hair so brown?' etc. etc.

As some things are too sad and too deep for tears, so some things are too grotesque and too funny for laughter. Of such a kind was Miss O'Ferrall's performance of 'Ben Bolt.'

From that capacious mouth and through that highbridged bony nose there rolled a volume of breathy sound, not loud, but so immense that it seemed to come from all round, to be reverberated

from every surface in the studio. She followed more or less the shape of the tune, going up when it rose and down when it fell, but with such immense intervals between the notes as were never dreamed of in any mortal melody. It was as though she could never once have deviated into tune, never once have hit upon a true note, even by a fluke—in fact, as though she were absolutely tone-deaf, and without ear, although she stuck to the time correctly enough. She finished her song amid an embarrassing silence. The audience didn't quite know whether it were meant for fun or seriously. One wondered if she were not paying out Svengali for his impertinent performance of 'Messieurs les Étudiants.' If so, it was a capital



THE 'ROSEMONDE' OF SCHUBERT

piece of impromptu tit-for-tat admirably acted, and a very ugly gleam yellowed the tawny black of Svengali's big eyes. He was so fond of making fun of others that he particularly resented being made fun of himself—couldn't endure that any one should ever have the laugh of *him*.

At length Little Billee said: 'Thank you so much. It's a capital song.'

'Yes,' said Miss O'Ferrall. 'It's the only song I know, unfortunately. My father used to sing it, just like that, when he felt jolly after hot rum-and-water. It used to make people cry; he used to cry over it himself. I never do. Some people think I can't sing a bit. All I can say is that I've often had to sing it six or seven

times running in *lots* of studios. I vary it, you know—not the words, but the tune. You must remember that I've only taken to it lately. Do you know Litolff? Well, he's a great composer, and he came to Durien's the other day, and I sang "Ben Bolt," and what do you think he said? Why, he said Madame Alboni couldn't go nearly so high or so low as I did, and that her voice wasn't half so big. He gave me his word of honour. He said I breathed as natural and straight as a baby, and all I want is to get my voice a little more under control. That's what *he* said.'

'Qu'est-ce qu'elle dit?' asked Svengali. And she said it all over again to him in French—quite French French—of the most colloquial kind. Her accent was not that of the Comédie Française, nor yet that of the Faubourg St. Germain, nor yet that of the shop, or the pavement. It was quaint and expressive—'funny without being vulgar.'

'Barpleu! he was right, Litolff,' said Svengali. 'I assure you, matemoiselle, that I have never heard a voice that can equal yours; you have a talent quite exceptional.'

She blushed with pleasure, and the others thought him a 'beastly cad' for poking fun at the poor girl in such a way. And they thought Monsieur Litolff another.

She then got up and shook the crumbs off her coat, and slipped her feet into Durien's slippers, saying, in English: 'Well, I've got to go back. Life ain't all beer and skittles, and more's the pity; but what's the odds, so long as you're happy?'

On her way out she stopped before Taffy's picture—a chiffonnier with his lantern, bending over a dust-heap. For Taffy was, or thought himself, a passionate realist in those days. He has changed, and now paints nothing but King Arthurs and Guineveres and Lancelots and Elaines, and floating Ladies of Shalott.

'That chiffonnier's basket isn't hitched high enough,' she remarked. 'How could he tap his pick against the rim and make the rag fall into it if it's hitched only halfway up his back? And he's got the wrong sabots, and the wrong lantern; it's *all* wrong.'

'Dear me!' said Taffy, turning very red; 'you seem to know a lot about it. It's a pity you don't paint yourself.'

'Ah! now you're cross!' said Miss O'Ferrall. 'Oh, maie aïe!'

She went to the door and paused, looking round benignly. 'What nice teeth you've all three got! That's because you're Englishmen, I suppose, and clean them twice a day. I do too. Trilby O'Ferrall, that's my name, 48 Rue des Pousse-Cailloux!—pose pour l'ensemble, quand ça l'amuse! va-t-en ville, et fait tout ce qui concerne son état! Don't forget. Thanks all, and good-bye.'

'En v'là une orichinale,' said Svengali.

'I think she's lovely,' said Little Billee, the young and tender. 'Oh heavens, what angel's feet! It makes me sick to think she sits for the figure. I'm sure she's quite a lady.'

And in five minutes or so, with the point of an old compass,

he scratched in white on the dark red wall a three-quarter profile outline of Trilby's left foot, which was perhaps the more perfect poem of the two.

Slight as it was, this little piece of impromptu etching, in its sense of beauty, in its quick seizing of a peculiar individuality, its subtle rendering of a strongly-received impression, was already the work of a master. It was Trilby's foot and nobody else's, nor could have been, and nobody else but Little Billee could have drawn it in just that inspired way.

'Qu'est-ce que c'est, "Ben Bolt"?' inquired Gecko.

Upon which Little Billee was made by Taffy to sit down to the piano and sing it. He sang it very nicely with his pleasant little throaty English barytone.

It was solely in order that Little Billee should have opportunities of practising this graceful accomplishment of his, for his own and his friends' delectation, that the piano had been sent over from London, at great cost to Taffy and the Laird. It had belonged to Taffy's mother, who was dead.

Before he had finished the second verse, Svengali exclaimed: 'Mais c'est tout-à-fait chentil! Allons, Gecko, choutez-nous ça!'

And he put his big hands on the piano, over Little Billee's, pushed him off the music-stool with his great gaunt body, and, sitting on it himself, he played a masterly prelude. It was impressive to hear the complicated richness and volume of the sounds he evoked after Little Billee's gentle 'tink-a-tink'.

And Gecko, cuddling lovingly his violin and closing his upturned eyes, played that simple melody as it had probably never been played before—such passion, such pathos, such a tone!—and they turned it and twisted it, and went from one key to another, playing into each other's hands, Svengali taking the lead; and fugued and canoned and counterpointed and battledored and shuttlecocked it, high and low, soft and loud, in minor, in pizzicato, and in *sordino*—*adagio*, *andante*, *allegretto*, *scherzo*—and exhausted all its possibilities of beauty; till their susceptible audience of three was all but crazed with delight and wonder; and the masterful Ben Bolt, and his over-tender Alice, and his too submissive friend, and his old schoolmaster so kind and so true, and his long-dead schoolmates, and the rustic porch and the mill, and the slab of granite so gray,

'And the dear little nook
By the clear running brook,'

were all magnified into a strange, almost holy poetic dignity and splendour quite undreamed of by whoever wrote the words and music of that unsophisticated little song, which has touched so many simple British hearts that don't know any better—and among them, once, that of the present scribe—long, long ago!

'Sacrepleu! il choue pien, le Checko, hein?' said Svengali, when they had brought this wonderful double improvisation to a climax

and a close. 'C'est mon élève! che le faid chanter sur son fiolon, c'est comme si c'était *moi* qui chantais! ach! si ch'afais pour teus sous de voix, che serais le bremier chanteur du monte! I cannot sing!' he continued. (I will translate him into English, without attempting to translate his accent, which is a mere matter of judiciously transposing p's and b's, and t's and d's, and f's and v's, and g's and k's, and turning the soft French j into sch, and a pretty language into an ugly one.)

'I cannot sing myself, I cannot play the violin, but I can teach—hein, Gecko? And I have a pupil—hein, Gecko?—la betite Honorine;' and here he leered all round with a leer that was not engaging. 'The world shall hear of la betite Honorine some day—hein, Gecko? Listen all—this is how I teach la betite Honorine! Gecko, play me a little accompaniment in pizzicato.'

And he pulled out of his pocket a kind of little flexible flageolet (of his own invention, it seems), which he screwed together and put to his lips, and on this humble instrument he played 'Ben Bolt,' while Gecko accompanied him, using his fiddle as a guitar, his adoring eyes fixed in reverence on his master.

And it would be impossible to render in any words the deftness, the distinction, the grace, power, pathos, and passion with which this truly phenomenal artist executed the poor old twopence tune on his elastic penny whistle—for it was little more—such thrilling, vibrating, piercing tenderness, now loud and full, a shrill scream of anguish, now soft as a whisper, a mere melodic breath, more human almost than the human voice itself, a perfection unattainable even by Gecko, a master, on an instrument which is the acknowledged king of all!

So that the tear, which had been so close to the brink of Little Billee's eye while Gecko was playing, now rose and trembled under his eyelid and spilled itself down his nose; and he had to dissemble and surreptitiously mop it up with his little finger as he leaned his chin on his hand, and cough a little husky, unnatural cough—*pour se donner une contenance!*

He had never heard such music as this, never dreamed such music was possible. He was conscious, while it lasted, that he saw deeper into the beauty, the sadness of things, the very heart of them, and their pathetic evanescence, as with a new, inner eye—even into eternity itself, beyond the veil—a vague cosmic vision that faded when the music was over, but left an unfading reminiscence of its having been, and a passionate desire to express the like some day through the plastic medium of his own beautiful art.

When Svengali ended, he leered again on his dumbstruck audience, and said: 'That is how I teach la betite Honorine to sing; that is how I teach Gecko to play; that is how I teach "*il bel canto*"! It was lost, the *bel canto*—but I found it, in a dream—I, and nobody else—I—Svengali—I—I—I! But that is enough of music; let us play at something else—let us play at this!' he cried, jumping

up and seizing a foil and bending it against the wall.... 'Come along, Little Billee, and I will show you something more you don't know....'

So Little Billee took off coat and waistcoat, donned mask and glove and fencing-shoes, and they had an 'assault of arms,' as it is nobly called in French, and in which poor Little Billee came off very badly. The German Pole fenced wildly, but well.

Then it was the Laird's turn, and he came off badly too; so then Taffy took up the foil, and redeemed the honour of Great Britain, as became a British hussar and a Man of Blood. For Taffy, by long and assiduous practice in the best school in Paris (and also by virtue of his native aptitudes), was a match for any *maître d'armes* in the whole French army, and Svengali got 'what for.'

And when it was time to give up play and settle down to work, others dropped in—French, English, Swiss, German, American, Greek; curtains were drawn and shutters opened; the studio was flooded with light—and the afternoon was healthily spent in athletic and gymnastic exercises till dinner-time.

But Little Billee, who had had enough of fencing and gymnastics for the day, amused himself by filling up with black and white and red-chalk strokes the outline of Trilby's foot on the wall, lest he should forget his fresh vision of it, which was still to him as the thing itself—an absolute reality, born of a mere glance, a mere chance—a happy caprice!

Durien came in and looked over his shoulder, and exclaimed: 'Tiens! le pied de Trilby! vous avez fait ça d'après nature?'

'Nong!'

'De mémoire, alors?'

'Wee!'

'Je vous en fais mon compliment! Vous avez eu la main heureuse. Je voudrais bien avoir fait ça, moi! C'est un petit chef-d'oeuvre que vous avez fait là—tout bonnement, mon cher! Mais vous élaborez trop. De grâce, n'y touchez plus!'

And Little Billee was pleased, and touched it no more; for Durien was a great sculptor and sincerity itself.

And then—well, I happen to forget what sort of day this particular day turned into at about six of the clock.

If it was decently fine, the most of them went off to dine at the Restaurant de la Couronne, kept by the Père Trin (in the Rue de Monsieur), who gave you of his best to eat and drink for twenty sols Paris, or one franc in the coin of the empire. Good distending soups, omelets that were only too savoury, lentils, red and white beans, meat so dressed and sauced and seasoned that you didn't know whether it was beef or mutton—flesh, fowl, or good red herring—or even bad, for that matter—nor very greatly cared.

And just the same lettuce, radishes, and cheese of Gruyère or Brie as you got at the Trois Frères Provençaux (but not the same

butter!). And to wash it all down, generous wine in wooden *brocs*—that stained a lovely aesthetic blue everything it was spilled over.

And you hobnobbed with models, male and female, students of law and medicine, painters and sculptors, workmen and *blanchisseuses* and *grisettes*, and found them very good company, and most improving to your French, if your French was of the usual British kind, and even to some of your manners, if these were very British indeed. And the evening was innocently wound up with billiards, cards, or dominoes at the Café du Luxembourg opposite; or at the Théâtre du Luxembourg, in the Rue de Madame, to see funny farces with screamingly droll Englishmen in them; or, still better, at the Jardin Bullier (la Closerie des Lilas), to see the students dance the cancan, or try and dance it yourself, which is not so easy as it seems; or, best of all, at the Théâtre de l'Odéon, see some piece of the classical *répertoire*.

Or, if it were not only fine, but a Saturday afternoon into the bargain, the Laird would put on a necktie and a few other necessary things, and the three friends would walk arm-in-arm to Taffy's hotel in the Rue de Seine, and wait outside till he had made himself as presentable as the Laird, which did not take very long. And then (Little Billee was always presentable) they would, arm-in-arm, the huge Taffy in the middle, descend the Rue de Seine and cross a bridge to the Cité, and have a look in at the Morgue. Then back again to the quays on the *rive gauche* by the Pont Neuf, to wend their way westward; now on one side to look at the print and picture shops and the *magasins* of bric-à-brac, and haply sometimes buy thereof, now on the other to finger and cheapen the second-hand books for sale on the parapet, and even pick up one or two utterly unwanted bargains, never to be read or opened again.

When they reached the Pont des Arts they would cross it, stopping in the middle to look up the river towards the old Cité and Notre Dame, eastward, and dream unutterable things, and try to utter them. Then, turning westward, they would gaze at the glowing sky and all it glowed upon—the corner of the Tuileries and the Louvre, the many bridges, the Chamber of Deputies, the golden river narrowing its perspective and broadening its bed as it went flowing and winding on its way between Passy and Grenelle to St. Cloud, to Rouen, to the Havre, to England perhaps—where *they* didn't want to be just then; and they would try and express themselves to the effect that life was uncommonly well worth living in that particular city at that particular time of the day and year and century, at that particular epoch of their own mortal and uncertain lives.

Then, still arm-in-arm and chatting gaily, across the courtyard of the Louvre, through gilded gates well guarded by reckless imperial Zouaves, up the arcaded Rue de Rivoli as far as the Rue Castiglione, where they would stare with greedy eyes at the window

of the great corner pastry-cook, and marvel at the beautiful assortment of bonbons, *pralines*, *dragées*, *marrons glacés*—saccharine, crystalline substances of all kinds and colours, as charming to look at as an illumination; precious stones, delicately-frosted sweets, pearls and diamonds so arranged as to melt in the mouth; especially, at this particular time of the year, the monstrous Easter-egg, of enchanting hue, enshrined like costly jewels in caskets of satin and gold; and the Laird, who was well read in his English classics and liked to show it, would opine that 'they managed these things better in France.'

Then across the street by a great gate into the Allée des Feuillants, and up to the Place de la Concorde—to gaze, but quite without base envy, at the smart people coming back from the Bois de Boulogne. For even in Paris 'carriage people' have a way of looking bored, of taking their pleasure sadly, of having nothing to say to each other, as though the vibration of so many wheels all rolling home the same way every afternoon had hypnotised them into silence, idiocy, and melancholia.

And our three musketeers of the brush would speculate on the vanity of wealth and rank and fashion; on the satiety that follows in the wake of self-indulgence and overtakes it; on the weariness of the pleasures that become a toil—as if they knew all about it, had found it all out for themselves, and nobody else had ever found it out before!

Then they found out something else—namely, that the sting of healthy appetite was becoming intolerable; so they would betake themselves to an English eatinghouse in the Rue de la Madeleine (on the left-hand side near the top), where they would renovate their strength and their patriotism on British beef and beer, and household bread, and bracing, biting, stinging yellow mustard, and heroic horseradish, and noble apple-pie, and Cheshire cheese; and get through as much of these in an hour or so as they could for talking, talking, talking; such happy talk! as full of sanguine hope and enthusiasm, of cocksure commendation or condemnation of all painters, dead or alive, of modest but firm belief in themselves and each other, as a Paris Easter-egg is full of sweets and pleasantness (for the young).

And then a stroll on the crowded, well-lighted boulevards, and a bock at the café there, at a little threelegged marble table right out on the genial asphalt side pavement, still talking nineteen to the dozen.

Then home by dark, old, silent streets and some deserted bridge to their beloved Latin Quarter, the Morgue gleaming cold and still and fatal in the pale lamplight, and Notre Dame pricking up its watchful twin towers, which have looked down for so many centuries on so many happy, sanguine, expansive youths walking arm-in-arm by twos and threes, and for ever talking, talking, talking.....

The Laird and Little Billee would see Taffy safe to the door of his *hôtel garni* in the Rue de Seine, where they would find much to say to each other before they said good-night—so much that Taffy and Little Billee would see the Laird safe to *his* door, in the Place St. Anatole des Arts. And then a discussion would arise between Taffy and the Laird on the immortality of the soul, let us say, or the exact meaning of the word 'gentleman,' or the relative merits of Dickens and Thackeray, or some such recondite and quite



"THREE MUSKETEERS OF THE BRUSH"

unhackneyed theme, and Taffy and the Laird would escort Little Billee to *his* door, in the Place de l'Odéon, and he would re-escort them both back again, and so on till any hour you please.

Or again, if it rained, and Paris through the studio window loomed lead-coloured, with its shiny slate roofs under skies that were ashen and sober, and the wild west wind made woeful music among the chimney-pots, and little gray waves ran up the river the wrong way, and the Morgue looked chill and dark and wet, and almost uninviting (even to three healthy-minded young Britons), they would resolve to dine and spend a happy evening at home.

Little Billee, taking with him three francs (or even four), would dive into back streets and buy a yard or so of crusty new bread, well burned on the flat side, a fillet of beef, a litre of wine, potatoes and onions, butter, a little cylindrical cheese called 'bondon de Neufchâtel,' tender curly lettuce, with chervil, parsley, spring onions, and other fine herbs, and a pod of garlic, which would be rubbed on a crust of bread to flavour things with.

Taffy would lay the cloth English-wise, and also make the salad, for which, like everybody else I ever met, he had a special receipt of his own (putting in the oil first and the vinegar after); and indeed his salads were quite as good as everybody else's.

The Laird, bending over the stove, would cook the onions and beef into a savoury Scotch mess so cunningly that you could not taste the beef for the onions—nor always the onions for the garlic.

And they would dine far better than at le Père Trin's, far better than at the English Restaurant in the Rue de la Madeleine—better than anywhere else on earth!

And after dinner, what coffee, roasted and ground on the spot, what pipes and cigarettes of *caporal*, by the light of the three shaded lamps, while the rain beat against the big north window, and the wind went howling round the quaint old mediaeval tower at the corner of the Rue Vieille des Trois Mauvais Ladres (the old street of the three bad lepers), and the damp logs hissed and crackled in the stove!

What jolly talk into the small hours! Thackeray and Dickens again, and Tennyson and Byron (who was 'not deed yet' in those days); and Titian and Velasquez, and young Millais and Holman Hunt (just out); and Monsieur Ingres and Monsieur Delacroix, and Balzac and Stendhal and George Sand; and the good Dumas! and Edgar Allan Poe; and the glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome....

Good, honest, innocent, artless prattle—not of the wisest, perhaps, nor redolent of the very highest culture (which, by the way, can mar as well as make), nor leading to any very practical result; but quite pathetically sweet from the sincerity and fervour of its convictions, a profound belief in their importance, and a proud trust in their life-long immutability.

Oh, happy days and happy nights, sacred to art and friendship! oh, happy times of careless impecuniosity, and youth and hope and health and strength and freedom—with all Paris for a playground, and its dear old unregenerate Latin Quarter for a workshop and a home!

And, up to then, no kill-joy complications of love!

No, decidedly no! Little Billee had never known such happiness as this—never even dreamed of its possibility.

A day or two after this, our opening day, but in the afternoon, when the fencing and boxing had begun and the trapeze was in full

swing, Trilby's 'Milk below!' was sounded at the door, and she appeared—clothed this time and in her right mind, as it seemed: a tall, straight, flat-backed, square-shouldered, deep-chested, full-bosomed young grisette, in a snowy frilled cap, a neat black gown and white apron, pretty faded, well-darned brown stockings, and well-worn, soft, gray, square-toed slippers of list, without heels and originally shapeless; but which her feet, uncompromising and inexorable as boot-trees, had ennobled into everlasting classic shapeliness, and stamped with an unforgettable individuality, as does a beautiful hand its well-worn glove—a fact Little Billee was not slow to perceive, with a curious conscious thrill that was only half aesthetic.

Then he looked into her freckled face, and met the kind and tender mirthfulness of her gaze and the plucky frankness of her fine wide smile with a thrill that was not aesthetic at all (nor the reverse), but all of the heart. And in one of his quick flashes of intuitive insight he divined far down beneath the shining surface of those eyes (which seemed for a moment to reflect only a little image of himself against the sky beyond the big north window) a well of sweetness; and floating somewhere in the midst of it the very heart of compassion, generosity, and warm sisterly love; and under that—alas! at the bottom of all—a thin slimy layer of sorrow and shame. And just as long as it takes for a tear to rise and gather and choke itself back again, this sudden revelation shook his nervous little frame with a pang of pity and the knightly wish to help. But he had no time to indulge in such soft emotions. Trilby was met on her entrance by friendly greetings on all sides.

'Tiens! c'est la grande Trilby!' exclaimed Jules Guinot through his fencing-mask. 'Comment; t'es déjà debout après hier soir? Avons-nous assez rigolé chez Mathieu, hein? Crénom d'un nom, quelle noce! V'là une crémaillère qui peut se vanter d'être diamamment bien pendue, j'espère! Et la petite santé, c' matin?'

'Hé, hé! mon vieux,' answered Trilby. 'Ça boulotte, apparemment! Et toi? et Victorine? Comment qu'a s' porte à c't'heure? Elle avait un fier coup d'chasselas! c'est-y jobard, hein? de s' fich 'paf comme ça d'avant l' monde! Tiens, v'là, Gontran! ça marche-t-y, Gontran, Zouzou d' mon coeur?'

'Comme sur des roulettes, ma biche!' said Gontran, *alias* l'Zouzou—a corporal in the Zouaves. 'Mais tu t'es donc mise chiffonnière, à présent? T'as fait banque-route?'

(For Trilby had a chiffonnier's basket strapped on her back, and carried a pick and lantern.)

'Mais-z-oui, mon bon!' she said. 'Dame! pas d' veine hier soir! t'as bien vu! Dans la dêche jusqu'aux omoplates, mon pauv' caporal-sous-off! nom d'un canon—faut bien vivre, s' pas?'

Little Billee's heart-sluides had closed during this interchange of courtesies. He felt it to be of a very slangy kind, because he couldn't understand a word of it, and he hated slang. All he could

make out was the free use of the *tu* and the *toi*, and he knew enough French to know that this implied a great familiarity, which he misunderstood.

So that Jules Guinot's polite inquiries whether Trilby were none the worse after Mathieu's house-warming (which was so jolly), Trilby's kind solicitude about the health of Victorine, who had very foolishly taken a drop too much on that occasion, Trilby's mock regrets that her own bad luck at cards had made it necessary that she should retrieve her fallen fortunes by rag-picking—all these innocent, playful little amenities (which I have tried to write down just as they were spoken) were couched in a language that was as Greek to him—and he felt out of it, jealous and indignant.

'Good-afternoon to you, Mr. Taffy,' said Trilby, in English. 'I've brought you these objects of art and vertu to make the peace with you. They're the real thing, you know. I borrowed 'em from le père Martin, chiffonnier en gros et en détail, grand officier de la Légion d'Honneur, membre de l'Institut et cetera, treize bis Rue du Puits d'Amour, rez-de-chaussée au fond de la cour à gauche, vis-à-vis le mont-de-piété! He's one of my intimate friends, and——'

'You don't mean to say you're the intimate friend of a rag-picker?' exclaimed the good Taffy.

'Oh yes! Pourquoi pas? I never brag; besides, there ain't any beastly pride about le père Martin,' said Trilby, with a wink. 'You'd soon find that out if you were an intimate friend of his. This is how it's put on. Do you see? If you'll put it on I'll fasten it for you, and show you how to hold the lantern and handle the pick. You may come to it yourself some day, you know. Il ne faut jurer de rien! Père Martin will pose for you in person, if you like. He's generally disengaged in the afternoon. He's poor but honest, you know, and very nice and clean; quite the gentleman. He likes artists, especially English—they pay. His wife sells bric-à-brac and old masters; Rembrandts from two francs fifty upwards. They've got a little grandson—a love of a child. I'm his godmother. You know French, I suppose?'

'Oh yes,' said Taffy, much abashed. 'I'm very much obliged to you—very much indeed—a—I—a——'

'Y a pas d'quoi!' said Trilby, divesting herself of her basket and putting it, with the pick and lantern, in a corner. 'Et maintenant, le temps d'absorber une fine de fin sec (a cigarette) et je m' la brise (I'm off). On m'attend à l'Ambassade d'Autriche. Et puis zut! Allez toujours, mes enfants. En avant la boxe!'

She sat herself down cross-legged on the model-throne, and made herself a cigarette, and watched the fencing and boxing. Little Billee brought her a chair, which she refused; so he sat down on it himself by her side, and talked to her, just as he would have talked to any young lady at home—about the weather, about Verdi's new opera (which she had never heard), the impressiveness of

Notre Dame, and Victor Hugo's beautiful romance (which she had never read), the mysterious charm of Leonardo da Vinci's Lisa Gioconda's smile (which she had never seen)—by all of which she was no doubt rather tickled and a little embarrassed, perhaps also a little touched.

Taffy brought her a cup of coffee, and conversed with her in polite formal French very well and carefully pronounced; and the Laird tried to do likewise. *His* French was of that honest English kind that breaks up the stiffness of even an English party; and his jolly manners were such as to put an end to all shyness and constraint, and make self-consciousness impossible.

Others dropped in from neighbouring studios—the usual cosmopolite crew. It was a perpetual come-and-go in this particular studio between four and six in the afternoon.

There were ladies too, *en cheveux*, in caps and bonnets, some of whom knew Trilby, and thee'd and thou'd with familiar and friendly affection, while others mademoiselle'd her with distant politeness, and were mademoiselle'd and madame'd back again. 'Absolument comme à l'Ambassade d'Autriche,' as Trilby observed to the Laird, with a British wink that was by no means ambassadorial.

Then Svengali came and made some of his grandest music, which was as completely thrown away on Trilby as fireworks on a blind beggar, for all she held her tongue so piously.

Fencing and boxing and trapezing seemed to be more in her line; and indeed, to a tone-deaf person, Taffy lunging his full spread with a foil, in all the splendour of his long, lithe, youthful strength, was a far gainlier sight than Svengali at the keyboard flashing his languid bold eyes with a sickly smile from one listener to another, as if to say: 'N'est-ce pas que che suis beau? N'est-ce pas que ch'ai tu chénié? N'est-ce pas que che suis suplime, enfin?'

Then enter Durien the sculptor, who had been presented with a *baaignoire* at the Porte St. Martin to see *La Dame aux Camélias*, and he invited Trilby and another lady to dine with him *au cabaret* and share his box.

So Trilby didn't go to the Austrian embassy after all, as the Laird observed to Little Billee, with such a good imitation of her wink that Little Billee was bound to laugh.

But Little Billee was not inclined for fun; a dulness, a sense of disenchantment, had come over him; as he expressed it to himself, with pathetic self-pity:

'A feeling of sadness and longing
That is not akin to pain,
And resembles sorrow only
As the mist resembles the rain.'

And the sadness, if he had known, was that all beautiful young women with kind sweet faces and noble figures and goddess-like extremities should not be good and pure as they were beautiful;

and the longing was a longing that Trilby could be turned into a young lady—say the vicar's daughter in a little Devonshire village—his sister's friend and co-teacher at the Sunday school, a simple, pure, and pious maiden of gentle birth.

For he adored piety in woman, although he was not pious by any means. His inarticulate, intuitive perceptions were not of form and colour secrets only, but strove to pierce the veil of deeper mysteries in impetuous and dogmatic boyish scorn of all received interpretations. For he flattered himself that he possessed the philosophical and scientific mind, and piqued himself on thinking clearly, and was intolerant of human inconsistency.

That small reserve portion of his ever-active brain which should have lain fallow while the rest of it was at work or play, perpetually plagued itself about the mysteries of life and death, and was for ever propounding unanswerable arguments against the Christian belief, through a kind of inverted sympathy with the believer. Fortunately for his friends, Little Billee was both shy and discreet, and very tender of other people's feelings; so he kept all his immature juvenile agnosticism to himself.

To atone for such ungainly strong-mindedness in one so young and tender, he was the slave of many little traditional observances which have no very solid foundation in either science or philosophy. For instance, he wouldn't walk under a ladder for worlds, nor sit down thirteen to dinner, nor have his hair cut on a Friday, and was quite upset if he happened to see the new moon through glass. And he believed in lucky and unlucky numbers, and dearly loved the sights and scents and sounds of high mass in some dim old French cathedral, and found them secretly comforting.

Let us hope that he sometimes laughed at himself, if only in his sleeve!

And with all his keenness of insight into life he had a well-brought-up, middle-class young Englishman's belief in the infallible efficacy of gentle birth—for gentle he considered his own and Taffy's and the Laird's, and that of most of the good people he had lived among in England—all people, in short, whose two parents and four grandparents had received a liberal education and belonged to the professional class. And with this belief he combined (or thought he did) a proper democratic scorn for bloated dukes and lords, and even poor inoffensive baronets, and all the landed gentry—everybody who was born an inch higher up than himself.

It is a fairly good middle-class social creed, if you can only stick to it through life in despite of life's experience. It fosters independence and self-respect, and not a few stodgy practical virtues as well. At all events, it keeps you out of bad company, which is to be found both above and below. *In medio tutissimus ibis!*

And all this melancholy preoccupation, on Little Billee's part, from the momentary gleam and dazzle of a pair of over-perfect feet in an over-aesthetic eye, too much enamoured of mere form!

Reversing the usual process, he had idealised from the base upward!

Many of us, older and wiser than Little Billee, have seen in lovely female shapes the outer garment of a lovely female soul. The instinct which guides us to do this is, perhaps, a right one, more often than not. But more often than not, also, lovely female shapes are terrible complicators of the difficulties and dangers of this earthly life, especially for their owner, and more especially if she be a humble daughter of the people, poor and ignorant, of a yielding nature, too quick to love and trust. This is all so true as to be trite—so trite as to be a common platitude!

A modern teller of tales, most widely (and most justly) popular, tells us of Californian heroes and heroines who, like Lord Byron's Corsair, were linked with one virtue and a thousand crimes. And so dexterously does he weave his story that the Young Person may read it and learn nothing but good.

My poor heroine was the converse of these engaging criminals; she had all the virtues but one; but the virtue she lacked (the very one of all that plays the title-rôle, and gives its generic name to all the rest of that goodly company) was of such a kind that I have found it impossible so to tell her history as to make it quite fit and proper reading for the ubiquitous young person so dear to us all.

Most deeply to my regret. For I had fondly hoped it might one day be said of me that whatever my other literary shortcomings might be, I at least had never penned a line which a pure-minded young British mother might not read aloud to her little blue-eyed babe as it lies sucking its little bottle in its little bassinette.

Fate has willed it otherwise.

Would indeed that I could duly express poor Trilby's one shortcoming in some not too familiar medium—in Latin or Greek, let us say—lest the Young Person (in this ubiquitousness of hers, for which Heaven be praised) should happen to pry into these pages when her mother is looking another way.

Latin and Greek are languages the Young Person should not be taught to understand—seeing that they are highly improper languages deservedly dead—in which pagan bards who should have known better have sung the filthy loves of their gods and goddesses.

But at least am I scholar enough to enter one little Latin plea on Trilby's behalf—the shortest, best, and most beautiful plea I can think of. It was once used in extenuation and condonation of the frailties of another poor weak woman, presumably, beautiful, and a far worse offender than Trilby, but who, like Trilby, repented of her ways, and was most justly forgiven—

'Quia multum amavit!'

Whether it be an aggravation of her misdeeds or an extenuating circumstance, no pressure of want, no temptations of greed or vanity, had ever been factors in urging Trilby on her downward

career after her first false step in that direction—the result of ignorance, bad advice (from her mother, of all people in the world), and base betrayal. She might have lived in guilty splendour had she chosen, but her wants were few. She had no vanity, and her tastes were of the simplest, and she earned enough to gratify them all, and to spare.

So she followed love for love's sake only, now and then, as she would have followed art if she had been a man—capriciously, desultorily, more in a frolicsome spirit of *camaraderie* than anything else. Like an amateur, in short—a distinguished amateur who is too proud to sell his pictures, but willingly gives one away now and then to some highly-valued and much-admiring friend.

Sheer gaiety of heart and genial good fellowship, the difficulty of saying nay to earnest pleading. She was *bonne camarade et bonne fille* before everything. Though her heart was not large enough to harbour more than one light love at a time (even in that Latin Quarter of genially capacious hearts), it had room for many warm friendships; and she was the warmest, most helpful, and most compassionate of friends, far more serious and faithful in friendship than in love.

Indeed, she might almost be said to possess a virginal heart, so little did she know of love's heartaches and raptures and torments and clings and jealousies.

With her it was lightly come and lightly go, and never come back again; as one or two, or perhaps three, picturesque Bohemians of the brush or chisel had found, at some cost to their vanity and self-esteem; perhaps even to a deeper feeling—who knows?

Trilby's father, as she had said, had been a gentleman, the son of a famous Dublin physician and friend of George the Fourth's. He had been a Fellow of his college, and had entered holy orders. He also had all the virtues but one; he was a drunkard, and began to drink quite early in life. He soon left the Church and became a classical tutor, and failed through this besetting sin of his, and fell into disgrace.

Then he went to Paris, and picked up a few English pupils there, and lost them, and earned a precarious livelihood from hand to mouth, anyhow, and sank from bad to worse.

And when his worst was about reached, he married the famous tartaned and tam-o'-shantered barmaid at the Montagnards Écossais, in the Rue du Paradis Poissonnière (a very fishy paradise indeed); she was a most beautiful Highland lassie of low degree, and she managed to support him, or helped him to support himself, for ten or fifteen years. Trilby was born to them, and was dragged up in some way—*à la grâce de Dieu!*

Patrick O'Ferrall soon taught his wife to drown all care and responsibility in his own simple way, and opportunities for doing so were never lacking to her.

Then he died, and left a posthumous child—born ten months after his death, alas! and whose birth cost its mother her life.

Then Trilby became a *blanchisseuse de fin*, and in two or three years came to grief through her trust in a friend of her mother's. Then she became a model besides, and was able to support her little brother, whom she dearly loved.

At the time this story begins, this small waif and stray was *en pension* with le père Martin, the rag-picker, and his wife, the dealer in bric-à-brac and inexpensive old masters. They were very good people, and had grown fond of the child, who was beautiful to look at, and full of pretty tricks and pluck and cleverness—a popular favourite in the Rue du Puits d'Amour and its humble neighbourhood.

Trilby, for some freak, always chose to speak of him as her godson, and as the grandchild of le père et la mère Martin, so that these good people had almost grown to believe he really belonged to them.

And almost every one else believed that he was the child of Trilby (in spite of her youth), and she was so fond of him that she didn't mind in the least.

He might have had a worse home.

La mère Martin was pious, or pretended to be; le père Martin was the reverse. But they were equally good for their kind, and though coarse and ignorant and unscrupulous in many ways (as was natural enough), they were gifted in a very full measure with the saving graces of love and charity, especially he. And if people are to be judged by their works, this worthy pair are no doubt both equally well compensated by now for the trials and struggles of their sordid earthly life.

So much for Trilby's parentage.

And as she sat and wept at Madame Doche's impersonation of *La Dame aux Camélias* (with her hand in Durien's) she vaguely remembered, as in a waking dream, now the noble presence of Taffy as he towered cool and erect, foil in hand, gallantly waiting for his adversary to breathe, now the beautiful sensitive face of Little Billee and his deferential courtesy.

And during the *entr'actes* her heart went out in friendship to the jolly Scotch Laird of Cockpen, who came out now and then with such terrible French oaths and abominable expletives (and in the presence of ladies, too!), without the slightest notion of what they meant.

For the Laird had a quick ear, and a craving to be colloquial and idiomatic before everything else, and made many awkward and embarrassing mistakes.

It would be with him as though a polite Frenchman should say to a fair daughter of Albion, 'D—— my eyes, mees, your tea is getting —— cold; let me tell that good old —— of a Jules to bring you another cup.'

And so forth, till time and experience taught him better. It is perhaps well for him that this first experiments in conversational French were made in the unconventional circle of the Place St. Anatole des Arts.

PART SECOND

'Dieu! qu'il fait bon la regarder,
La gracieuse, bonne et belle!
Pour les grands biens qui sont en elle
Chacun est prêt de la louer.'

Nobody knew exactly how Svengali lived, and very few knew where (or why). He occupied a roomy dilapidated garret, *au sixième*, in the Rue Tire-Liard, with a trucklebed and a pianoforte for furniture, and very little else.

He was poor, for in spite of his talent he had not yet made his mark in Paris. His manners may have been accountable for this. He would either fawn or bully, and could be grossly impertinent. He had a kind of cynical humour, which was more offensive than amusing, and always laughed at the wrong thing, at the wrong time, in the wrong place. And his laughter was always derisive and full of malice. And his egotism and conceit were not to be borne; and then he was both tawdry and dirty in his person; more greasily, mattedly unkempt than even a really successful pianist has any right to be even in the best society.

He was not a nice man, and there was no pathos in his poverty—a poverty that was not honourable, and need not have existed at all; for he was constantly receiving supplies from his own people in Austria—his old father and mother, his sisters, his cousins, and his aunts, hard-working, frugal folk of whom he was the pride and the darling.

He had but one virtue—his love of his art; or, rather, his love of himself as a master of his art—the master; for he despised, or affected to despise, all other musicians, living or dead—even those whose work he interpreted so divinely, and pitied them for not hearing Svengali give utterance to their music, which of course they could not utter themselves.

'Ils savent tous un peu toucher du biâno, mais pas grand'chose!'

He had been the best pianist of his time at the Conservatory in Leipsic; and, indeed, there was perhaps some excuse for this overweening conceit, since he was able to lend a quite peculiar individual charm of his own to any music he played, except the highest and best of all, in which he conspicuously failed.

He had to draw the line just above Chopin, where he reached his highest level. It will not do to lend your own quite peculiar individual charm to Handel and Bach and Beethoven; and Chopin is not bad as a *pis-aller*.

He had ardently wished to sing, and had studied hard to that end in Germany, in Italy, in France, with the forlorn hope of evolving from some inner recess a voice to sing with. But nature had been

singularly harsh to him in this one respect—inexorable. He was absolutely without voice, beyond the harsh, hoarse, weak raven's croak he used to speak with, and no method availed to make one for him. But he grew to understand the human voice as perhaps no one has understood it—before or since.

So in his head he went for ever singing, singing, singing, as probably no human nightingale has ever yet been able to sing out loud for the glory and delight of his fellow-mortals; making unheard heavenly melody of the cheapest, trivialest tunes—tunes of the café concert, tunes of the nursery, the shop-parlour, the guard-room, the schoolroom, the pothouse, the slum. There was nothing so humble, so base even, but what his magic could transform it into the rarest beauty without altering a note. This seems impossible, I know. But if it didn't, where would the magic come in?

Whatever of heart or conscience—pity, love, tenderness, manliness, courage, reverence, charity—endowed him at his birth had been swallowed up by this one faculty, and nothing of them was left for the common uses of life. He poured them all into his little flexible flageolet.

Svengali playing Chopin on the pianoforte, even (or especially) Svengali playing 'Ben Bolt' on that penny whistle of his, was as one of the heavenly host.

Svengali walking up and down the earth seeking whom he might cheat, betray, exploit, borrow money from, make brutal fun of, bully if he dared, cringe to if he must—man, woman, child, or dog—was about as bad as they make 'em.

To earn a few pence when he couldn't borrow them he played accompaniments at café concerts, and even then he gave offence; for in his contempt for the singer he would play too loud, and embroider his accompaniments with brilliant improvisations of his own, and lift his hands on high and bring them down with a bang in the sentimental parts, and shake his dirty mane and shrug his shoulders, and smile and leer at the audience, and do all he could to attract their attention to himself. He also gave a few music-lessons (not at ladies' schools, let us hope), for which he was not well paid, presumably, since he was always without a sou, always borrowing money, that he never paid back, and exhausting the pockets and the patience of one acquaintance after another.

He had but two friends. There was Gecko, who lived in a little garret close by in the Impasse des Ramoneurs, and who was second violin in the orchestra of the Gymnase, and shared his humble earnings with his master, to whom, indeed, he owed his great talent, not yet revealed to the world.

Svengali's other friend and pupil was (or rather had been) the mysterious Honorine, of whose conquest he was much given to boast, hinting that she was *une jeune femme du monde*. This was not the case. Mademoiselle Honorine Cahen (better known in the Quartier Latin as Mimi la Salope) was a dirty, drabby little dolly-mop of a

Jewess, a model for the figure—a very humble person indeed, socially.

She was, however, of a very lively disposition, and had a charming voice, and a natural gift of singing so sweetly that you forgot her accent, which was that of the *tout ce qu'il y a de plus canaille*.

She used to sit at Carrel's, and during the pose she would sing. When Little Billee first heard her he was so fascinated that 'it made him sick to think she sat for the figure'—an effect, by the way, that was always produced upon him by all specially attractive figure models of the gentler sex, for he had a reverence for woman. And before everything else, he had for the singing woman an absolute worship. He was especially thrall to the contralto—the deep low voice that breaks and changes in the middle and soars all at once into a magnified angelic boy treble. It pierced through his ears to his heart, and stirred his very vitals.

He had once heard Madame Alboni, and it had been an epoch in his life; he would have been an easy prey to the sirens! Even beauty paled before the lovely female voice singing in the middle of the note—the nightingale killed the bird of paradise.

I need hardly say that poor Mimi la Salope had not the voice of Madame Alboni, nor the art; but it was a beautiful voice of its little kind, always in the very middle of the note, and her artless art had its quick seduction.

She sang little songs of Béranger's—'Grand'mère, parlez-nous de lui!' or 'T'en souviens-tu? disait un capitaine—' or 'Enfants, c'est moi qui suis Lisette!' and such like pretty things, that almost brought the tears to Little Billee's easily-moistened eyes.

But soon she would sing little songs that were not by Béranger—little songs with slang words Little Billee hadn't French enough to understand; but from the kind of laughter with which the points were received by the 'rapins' in Carrel's studio he guessed these little songs were vile, though the touching little voice was as that of the seraphim still; and he knew the pang of disenchantment and vicarious shame.

Svengali had heard her sing at the Brasserie des Porcherons in the Rue du Crapaud-volant, and had volunteered to teach her; and she went to see him in his garret, and he played to her, and leered and ogled, and flashed his bold, black, beady Jew's eyes into hers, and she straightway mentally prostrated herself in reverence and adoration before this dazzling specimen of her race.

So that her sordid, mercenary little gutter-draggled soul was filled with the sight and the sound of him, as of a lordly, godlike, shawm-playing, cymbal-banging hero and prophet of the Lord God of Israel—David and Saul in one!

And then he set himself to teach her—kindly and patiently at first, calling her sweet little pet names—his 'Rose of Sharon,' his 'pearl of Pabylon,' his 'cazelle-eyed liddle Cherusalem skylark'—and promised her that she should be the queen of the nightingales.

But before he could teach her anything he had to unteach her all she knew; her breathing, the production of her voice, its emission—everything was wrong. She worked indefatigably to please him, and soon succeeded in forgetting all the pretty little sympathetic tricks of voice and phrasing Mother Nature had taught her.

But though she had an exquisite ear she had no real musical intelligence—no intelligence of any kind except about sous and centimes; she was as stupid as a little downy owl, and her voice was just a light native warble, a throstle's pipe, all in the head and nose and throat (a voice he *didn't* understand, for once), a thing of mere youth and health and bloom and high spirits—like her beauty, such as it was—*beauté du diable, beauté damnée*.

She did her very best, and practised all she could in this new way, and sang herself hoarse: she scarcely ate or slept for practising. He grew harsh and impatient and coldly severe, and of course she loved him all the more; and the more she loved him the more nervous she got and the worse she sang. Her voice cracked; her ear became demoralised; her attempts to vocalise grew almost as distressing as Trilby's. So that he lost his temper completely, and called her terrible names, and pinched and punched her with his big bony hands till she wept worse than Niobe, and borrowed money of her—five-franc pieces, even francs and demifrancs—which he never paid her back; and browbeat and bullied and bully-ragged her till she went quite mad for love of him, and would have jumped out of his sixth-floor window to give him a moment's pleasure!

He did not ask her to do this—it never occurred to him, and would have given him no pleasure to speak of. But one fine Sabbath morning (a Saturday, of course) he took her by the shoulders and chucked her, neck and crop, out of his garret, with the threat that if she ever dared to show her face there again he would denounce her to the police—an awful threat to the likes of poor Mimi la Salope!

'For where did all those five-franc pieces come from—*hein?*—with which she had tried to pay for all the singing lessons that had been thrown away upon her? Not from merely sitting to painters—*hein?*'

Thus the little gazelle-eyed Jerusalem skylark went back to her native street again—a mere mud-lark of the Paris slums—her wings clipped, her spirit quenched and broken, and with no more singing left in her than a common or garden sparrow—not so much!

And so, no more of 'la betite Honorine!'

The morning after this adventure Svengali woke up in his garret with a tremendous longing to spend a happy day; for it was a Sunday, and a very fine one.

He made a long arm and reached his waistcoat and trousers off the floor, and emptied the contents of their pockets on to his tattered blanket; no silver, no gold, only a few sous and two-sou pieces, just enough to pay for a meagre *premier déjeuner*!

He had cleared out Gecko the day before, and spent the proceeds (ten francs, at least) in one night's riotous living—pleasures in which Gecko had had no share; and he could think of no one to borrow money from but Little Billee, Taffy, and the Laird, whom he had neglected and left untapped for days.

So he slipped into his clothes, and looked at himself in what remained of a little zinc mirror, and found that his forehead left little to be desired, but that his eyes and temples were decidedly grimy. Wherefore, he poured a little water out of a little jug into a little basin, and twisting the corner of his pocket-handkerchief round his dirty forefinger, he delicately dipped it, and removed the offending stains. His fingers, he thought, would do very well for another day or two as they were; he ran them through his matted black mane, pushed it behind his ears, and gave it the twist he liked (and that was so much disliked by his English friends). Then he put on his *béret* and his velveteen cloak, and went forth into the sunny streets, with a sense of the fragrance and freedom and pleasantness of Sunday morning in Paris in the month of May.

He found Little Billee sitting in a zinc hip-bath, busy with soap and sponge; and was so tickled and interested by the sight that he quite forgot for the moment what he had come for.

'Himmel! Why the devil are you doing that?' he asked, in his German-Hebrew-French.

'Doing *what*?' asked Little Billee, in his French of Stratford-atte-Bowe.

'Sitting in water and playing with a cake of soap and a sponge!'

'Why, to try and get myself *clean*, I suppose!'

'Ach! And how the devil did you get yourself *dirty*, then?'

To this Little Billee found no immediate answer, and went on with his ablutions after the hissing, splashing, energetic fashion of Englishmen; and Svengali laughed loud and long at the spectacle of a little Englishman trying to get himself clean—*tâchant de se nettoyer*!

When such cleanliness had been attained as was possible under the circumstances, Svengali begged for the loan of two hundred francs, and Little Billee gave him a five-franc piece.

Content with this, *faute de mieux*, the German asked him when he would be trying to get himself clean again, as he would much like to come and see him do it.

'Demang matting, à votre sairveece!' said Little Billee, with a courteous bow.

'*What!! Monday too!!* Gott in Himmel! you try to get yourself clean *every day*?'

And he laughed himself out of the room, out of the house, out of the Place de l'Odéon—all the way to the Rue de Seine, where dwelt the 'Man of Blood,' whom he meant to propitiate with the story of that original, Little Billee, trying to get himself clean—that he might borrow another five-franc piece, or perhaps two.

As the reader will no doubt anticipate, he found Taffy in his bath also, and fell to laughing with such convulsive laughter, such twistings, screwings, and doublings of himself up, such pointings of his dirty forefinger at the huge naked Briton, that Taffy was offended, and all but lost his temper.

'What the devil are you cackling at, sacred head of pig that you are? Do you want to be pitched out of that window into the Rue de Seine? You filthy black Hebrew sweep! Just you wait a bit; I'll wash your head for you!'

And Taffy jumped out of his bath, such a towering figure of righteous Herculean wrath that Svengali was appalled, and fled.

'Donnerwetter!' he exclaimed as he tumbled down the narrow staircase of the Hôtel de Seine; 'what for a thick head! what for a pigdog! what for a rotten, brutal, *verfluchter kerl* of an Englisher!' Then he paused for thought.

'Now will I go to that Scottish Englisher, in the Place St. Anatole des Arts, for that other five-franc piece. But first will I wait a little while till he has perhaps finished trying to get himself clean.'

So he breakfasted at the crémèrie Souchet, in the Rue Clopin-Clopant, and, feeling quite safe again, he laughed and laughed till his very sides were sore.

Two Englishers in one day—as naked as your hand!—a big one and a little one, trying to get themselves clean! He rather flattered himself he had scored off those two Englishers.

After all, he was right perhaps, from his point of view; you can get as dirty in a week as in a lifetime, so what's the use of taking such a lot of trouble? Besides, so long as you are clean enough to suit your kind, to be any cleaner would be priggish and pedantic, and get you disliked.

Just as Svengali was about to knock at the Laird's door, Trilby came downstairs from Duriens', very unlike herself. Her eyes were red with weeping, and there were great black rings round them; she was pale under her freckles.

'Fous afez du chacrin, matemoiselle?' asked he.

She told him that she had neuralgia in her eyes, a thing she was subject to; that the pain was maddening, and generally lasted twenty-four hours.

'Perhaps I can cure you; come in here with me.'

The Laird's ablutions (if he had indulged in any that morning) were evidently over for the day. He was breakfasting on a roll and butter, and coffee of his own brewing. He was deeply distressed at the sight of poor Trilby's sufferings, and offered whisky and coffee and gingersnaps, which she would not touch.

Svengali told her to sit down on the divan, and sat opposite to her, and bade her look him well in the white of the eyes.

'Recartez-moi bien tans le blanc tes yeux.'

Then he made little passes and counterpasses on her forehead and temples and down her cheek and neck. Soon her eyes closed

and her face grew placid. After a while, a quarter of an hour perhaps, he asked her if she suffered still.

'Oh! presque plus du tout, monsieur—c'est le ciel.'

In a few minutes more he asked the Laird if he knew German.

'Just enough to understand,' said the Laird (who had spent a year in Düsseldorf), and Svengali said to him in German: 'See, she sleeps not, but she shall not open her eyes. Ask her.'

'Are you asleep, Miss Trilby?' asked the Laird.

'No.'

'Then open your eyes and look at me.'

She strained to open her eyes, but could not, and said so.

Then Svengali said, again in German, 'She shall not open her mouth. Ask her.'

'Why couldn't you open your eyes, Miss Trilby?'

She strained to open her mouth and speak, but in vain.

'She shall not rise from the divan. Ask her.'

But Trilby was spellbound, and could not move.

'I will now set her free,' said Svengali.

And, lo! she got up and waved her arms, and cried, 'Vive la Prusse! me v'là guérie!' and in her gratitude she kissed Svengali's hand; and he leered, and showed his big brown teeth and the yellow whites at the top of his big black eyes, and drew his breath with a hiss.

'Now I'll go to Durien's and sit. How can I thank you, monsieur? You have taken all my pain away.'

'Yes, matemoiselle. I have got it myself; it is in my elbows. But I love it, because it comes from you. Every time you have pain you shall come to me, 12 Rue Tire-Liard, au sixième au-dessus de l'entresol, and I will cure you and take your pain myself—'

'Oh, you are too good!' and in her high spirits she turned round on her heel and uttered her portentous warcry, 'Milk below!' The very rafters rang with it, and the piano gave out a solemn response.

'What is that you say, matemoiselle?'

'Oh, it's what the milkmen say in England.'

'It is a wonderful cry, matemoiselle—*wunderschön!* It comes straight through the heart; it has its roots in the stomach, and blossoms into music on the lips like the voice of Madame Alboni—voce sulle labbre! It is good production—c'est un cri du cœur!'

✓ Trilby blushed with pride and pleasure.

'Yes, matemoiselle! I only know one person in the whole world who can produce the voice so well as you! I give you my word of honour.'

'Who is it, monsieur—yourself?'

'Ach, no, matemoiselle; I have not that privilege. I have unfortunately no voice to produce.... It is a waiter at the Café de la Rotonde, in the Palais Royal; when you call for coffee, he says 'Boum!' in basso profondo. Tiefstimme—F moll below the

line—it is phenomenal! It is like a cannon—a cannon also has very good production, matemoiselle. They pay him for it a thousand francs a year, because he brings many customers to the Café de la Rotonde, where the coffee isn't very good, although it costs three sous a cup dearer than at the Café Larsouille in the Rue Flamberge-au-Vent. When he dies they will search all France for an-



“HIMMEL! THE ROOF OF YOUR MOUTH”

other, and then all Germany, where the good big waiters come from—and the cannons—but they will not find him, and the Café de la Rotonde will be bankrupt—unless you will consent to take his place. Will you permit that I shall look into your mouth, matemoiselle?”

She opened her mouth wide, and he looked into it.

‘Himmel! the roof of your mouth is like the dome of the Panthéon; there is room in it for “toutes les gloires de la France,” and a little to spare! The entrance to your throat is like the middle porch of

St. Sulpice when the doors are open for the faithful on All Saints' Day; and not one tooth is missing—thirty-two British teeth as white as milk and as big as knuckle-bones! and your little tongue is scooped out like the leaf of a pink peony, and the bridge of your nose is like the belly of a Stradivarius—what a sounding-board! and inside your beautiful big chest the lungs are made of leather! and your breath, it embalms—like the breath of a beautiful white heifer fed on the buttercups and daisies of the Vaterland! and you have a quick, soft, susceptible heart, a heart of gold, matemoiselle—all that sees itself in your face!

“Votre cœur est un luth suspendu!
Aussitôt qu'on le touche, il résonne. . . .”

What a pity you have not also the musical organisation!

‘Oh, but I *have*, monsieur; you heard me sing “Ben Bolt,” didn’t you? What makes you say that?’

Svengali was confused for a moment. Then he said: ‘When I play the “Rosemonde” of Schubert, matemoiselle, you look another way and smoke a cigarette. . . . You look at the big Taffy, at the Little Billee, at the pictures on the walls, or out of window, at the sky, the chimney-pots of Notre Dame de Paris; you do not look at Svengali!—Svengali, who looks at you with all his eyes, and plays you the “Rosemonde” of Schubert!’

‘Oh, maïe aïe!’ exclaimed Trilby; ‘you *do* use lovely language!’

‘But never mind, matemoiselle; when your pain arrives, then shall you come once more to Svengali, and he shall take it away from you, and keep it himself for a soufenir of you when you are gone. And when you have it no more, he shall play you the “Rosemonde” of Schubert, all alone for you; and then “Messieurs les étudiants, montez à la chaumière!” . . . because it is gayer! And you shall see nothing, hear nothing, think of nothing but Svengali, Svengali, Svengali!’

Here he felt his peroration to be so happy and effective that he thought it well to go at once and make a good exit. So he bent over Trilby’s shapely freckled hand and kissed it, and bowed himself out of the room, without even borrowing his five-franc piece.

‘He’s a rum ‘un, ain’t he?’ said Trilby. ‘He reminds me of a big hungry spider, and makes me feel like a fly! But he’s cured my pain! he’s cured my pain! Ah! you don’t know what my pain is when it comes!’

‘I wouldn’t have much to do with him, all the same!’ said the Laird. ‘I’d sooner have any pain than have it cured in that unnatural way, and by such a man as that! He’s a bad fellow, Svengali—I’m sure of it! He mesmerised you; that’s what it is—mesmerism! I’ve often heard of it, but never seen it done before. They get you into their power, and just make you do any blessed thing they please—lie, murder, steal—anything! and kill yourself into the bargain when they’ve done with you! It’s just too terrible to think of!’

So spake the Laird, earnestly, solemnly, surprised out of his usual self, and most painfully impressed—and his own impressiveness grew upon him and impressed him still more. He loomed quite prophetic.

Cold shivers went down Trilby's back as she listened. She had a singularly impressionable nature, as was shown by her quick and ready susceptibility to Svengali's hypnotic influence. And all that day, as she posed for Durien (to whom she did not mention her adventure), she was haunted by the memory of Svengali's big eyes and the touch of his soft, dirty finger-tips on her face; and her fear and her repulsion grew together.

And 'Svengali, Svengali, Svengali!' went ringing in her head and ears till it became an obsession, a dirge, a knell, an unendurable burden, almost as hard to bear as the pain in her eyes.

'Svengali, Svengali, Svengali!'

At last she asked Durien if he knew him.

'Parbleu! Si je connais Svengali!'

'Qu'est-ce que t'en penses?'

'Quand il sera mort, ça fera une fameuse crapule de moins!'

'CHEZ CARREL.'

Carrel's atelier (or painting-school) was in the Rue Notre Dame des Potirons St. Michel, at the end of a large courtyard, where there were many large dirty windows facing north, and each window let the light of heaven into a large dirty studio.

The largest of these studios, and the dirtiest, was Carrel's, where some thirty or forty art students drew and painted from the nude model every day but Sunday from eight till twelve, and for two hours in the afternoon, except on Saturdays, when the afternoon was devoted to much-needed Augean sweepings and cleanings.

One week the model was male, the next female, and so on, alternating throughout the year.

A stove, a model-throne, stools, boxes, some fifty strongly-built low chairs with backs, a couple of score easels and many drawing-boards, completed the *mobilier*.

The bare walls were adorned with endless caricatures—*des charges*—in charcoal and white chalk; and also the scrapings of many palettes—a polychromatic decoration not unpleasing.

For the freedom of the studio and the use of the model each student paid ten francs a month to the *massier*, or senior student, the responsible bell-wether of the flock; besides this, it was expected of you, on your entrance or initiation, that you should pay for your footing—your *bienvenue*—some thirty, forty, or fifty francs, to be spent on cakes and rum punch all round.

Every Friday Monsieur Carrel, a great artist, and also a stately well-dressed, and most courteous gentleman (duly decorated with the red rosette of the Legion of Honour), came for two or three

hours and went the round, spending a few minutes at each drawing-board or easel—ten or even twelve when the pupil was an industrious and promising one.

He did this for love, not money, and deserved all the reverence with which he inspired this somewhat irreverent and most unruly company, which was made up of all sorts.

Graybeards who had been drawing and painting there for thirty years and more, and remembered other masters than Carrel, and who could draw and paint a torso almost as well as Titian or Velasquez—almost, but not quite—and who could never do anything else, and were fixtures at Carrel's for life.

Younger men who in a year or two, or three or five, or ten or twenty, were bound to make their mark, and perhaps follow in the footsteps of the master; others as conspicuously singled out for failure and future mischance—for the hospital, the garret, the river, the Morgue, or, worse, the traveller's bag, the road, or even the paternal counter.

Irresponsible boys, mere *rapins*, all laugh and chaff and mischief—*blague et bagout Parisien*; little lords of misrule—wits, butts, bullies; the idle and industrious apprentice, the good and the bad, the clean and the dirty (especially the latter)—all more or less animated by a certain *esprit de corps*, and working very happily and genially together, on the whole, and always willing to help each other with sincere artistic counsel if it was asked for seriously, though it was not always couched in terms very flattering to one's self-love.

Before Little Billee became one of this band of brothers he had been working for three or four years in a London art school, drawing and painting from the life; he had also worked from the antique in the British Museum—so that he was no novice.

As he made his *début* at Carrels' one Monday morning he felt somewhat shy and ill at ease. He had studied French most earnestly at home in England, and could read it pretty well, and even write it and speak it after a fashion; but he spoke it with much difficulty, and found studio French a different language altogether from the formal and polite language he had been at such pains to acquire. Ollendorff does not cater for the Quartier Latin. Acting on Taffy's advice—for Taffy had worked under Carrel—Little Billee handed sixty francs to the *massier* for his *bienvenue*—a lordly sum—and this liberality made a most favourable impression, and went far to destroy any little prejudice that might have been caused by the daintiness of his dress, the cleanliness of his person, and the politeness of his manners. A place was assigned to him, and an easel and a board; for he elected to stand at his work and begin with a chalk drawing. The model (a male) was posed, and work began in silence. Monday morning is always rather sulky everywhere (except perhaps in Judee). During the ten minutes' rest three or four students came and looked at Little Billee's beginnings, and saw at a glance

that he thoroughly well knew what he was about, and respected him for it.

Nature had given him a singularly light hand—or rather two, for he was ambidextrous, and could use both with equal skill; and a few months' practice at a London life school had quite cured him of that purposeless indecision of touch which often characterises the prentice hand for years of apprenticeship, and remains with the amateur for life. The lightest and most careless of his pencil strokes had a precision that was inimitable, and a charm that specially belonged to him, and was easy to recognise at a glance. His touch on either canvas or paper was like Svengali's on the keyboard—unique.

As the morning ripened little attempts at conversation were made—little breakings of the ice of silence. It was Lambart, a youth with a singularly facetious face, who first woke the stillness with the following uncalled-for remarks in English very badly pronounced:

'Av you seen my fahzere's ole shoes?'

'I av not seen your fahzere's ole shoes.'

Then, after a pause:

'Av you seen my fahzere's ole 'at?'

'I av not seen your fahzere's ole 'at!'

Presently another said, 'Je trouve qu'il a une jolie tête, l'Anglais.'

But I will put it all into English:

'I find that he has a pretty head—the Englishman! What say you, Barizel?'

'Yes; but why has he got eyes like brandy-balls, two a penny?'

'Because he's an Englishman!'

'Yes; but why has he got a mouth like a guinea-pig, with two big teeth in front like the double blank at dominoes?'

'Because he's an Englishman!'

'Yes; but why has he got a back without any bend in it, as if he'd swallowed the Colonne Vendôme as far up as the battle of Austerlitz?'

'Because he's an Englishman!'

And so on, till all the supposed characteristics of Little Billee's outer man were exhausted. Then:

'Papelard!'

'What?'

'I should like to know if the Englishman says his prayers before going to bed.'

'Ask him.'

'Ask him yourself!'

'I should like to know if the Englishman has sisters; and if so, how old and how many and what sex.'

'Ask him.'

'Ask him yourself!'

'I should like to know the detailed and circumstantial history

of the Englishman's first love, and how he lost his innocence!
 'Ask him,' etc. etc. etc.

Little Billee, conscious that he was the subject of conversation, grew somewhat nervous. Soon he was addressed directly.

'Dites donc, l'Anglais?'

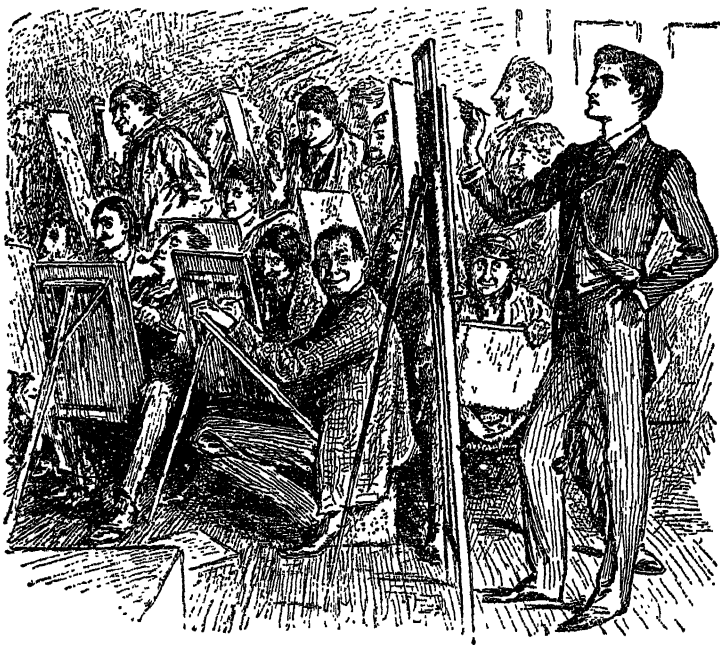
'Kwaw?' said Little Billee.

'Avez-vous une soeur?'

'Wee.'

'Est-ce qu'elle vous ressemble?'

'Nong.'



"'AV YOU SEEN MY FAHZERE'S OLE SHOES?'"

'C'est bien dommage! Est-ce qu'elle dit ses prières, le soir, en se couchant?'

A fierce look came into Little Billee's eyes and a redness to his cheeks, and this particular form of overture to friendship was abandoned.

Presently Lambert said, 'Si nous mettions l'Anglais à l'échelle?'

Little Billee, who had been warned, knew what this ordeal meant.

They tied you to a ladder, and carried you in procession up and down the courtyard, and if you were nasty about it they put you under the pump.

During the next rest it was explained to him that he must submit

to this indignity, and the ladder (which was used for reaching the high shelves round the studio) was got ready.

Little Billee smiled a singularly winning smile, and suffered himself to be bound with such good-humour that they voted it wasn't amusing, and unbound him, and he escaped the ordeal by ladder.

Taffy had also escaped, but in another way. When they tried to seize him he took up the first *rapin* that came to hand, and using him as a kind of club, he swung him about so freely and knocked down so many students and easels and drawing-boards with him, and made such a terrific rumpus, that the whole studio had to cry for 'pax!' Then he performed feats of strength of such a surprising kind that the memory of him remained in Carrel's studio for years, and he became a legend, a tradition, a myth! It is now said (in what still remains of the Quartier Latin) that he was seven feet high, and used to juggle with the *massier* and model as with a pair of billiard balls, using only his left hand!

To return to Little Billee. When it struck twelve, the cakes and rum punch arrived—a very goodly sight that put every one in a good temper.

The cakes were of three kinds—Babas, Madeleines, and Savarins—three sous a piece, fourpence-halfpenny the set of three. No nicer cakes are made in France, and they are as good in the Quartier Latin as anywhere else; no nicer cakes are made in the world, that I know of. You must begin with the Madeleine, which is rich and rather heavy; then the Baba; and finish up with the Savarin, which is shaped like a ring, very light, and flavoured with rum. And then you must really leave off.

The rum punch was tepid, very sweet, and not a bit too strong.

They dragged the model-throne into the middle, and a chair was put on for Little Billee, who dispensed his hospitality in a very polite and attractive manner, helping the *massier* first, and then the other graybeards in the order of their grayness, and so on down to the model.

Presently, just as he was about to help himself, he was asked to sing them an English song. After a little pressing he sung them a song about a gay cavalier who went to serenade his mistress (and a ladder of ropes, and a pair of masculine gloves that didn't belong to the gay cavalier, but which he found in his lady's bower)—a poor sort of song, but it was the nearest approach to a comic song he knew. There are four verses to it, and each verse is rather long. It does not sound at all funny to a French audience, and even with an English one Little Billee was not good at comic songs.

He was, however, much applauded at the end of each verse. When he had finished, he was asked if he were *quite* sure there wasn't any more of it, and they expressed a deep regret; and then each student, straddling on his little thick-set chair as on a horse, and clasping the back of it in both hands, galloped round Little Billee's

throne quite seriously—the strangest procession he had ever seen. It made him laugh till he cried, so that he could not eat or drink.

Then he served more punch and cake all round; and just as he was going to begin himself, Papelard said:

'Say, you others, I find that the Englishman has something of truly distinguished in the voice, something of sympathetic, of touching—something of *je ne sais quoi*!'

Bouchardy: 'Yes, yes—something of *je ne sais quoi*! That's the very phrase—*n'est-ce pas, vous autres?*—that is a good phrase that



TAFFY À L'ECHELLE!

Papelard has just invented to describe the voice of the Englishman. He is very intelligent—Papelard.'

Chorus: 'Perfect, perfect; he has the genius of characterisation—Papelard. Dites donc, l'Anglais! once more that beautiful song—hein? Nous vous en prions tous.'

Little Billee willingly sang it again, with even greater applause, and again they galloped, but the other way round and faster, so that Little Billee became quite hysterical, and laughed till his sides ached.

Then Dubosc: 'I find there is something of very capitious and exciting in English music—of very stimulating. And you, Bouchardy?

Bouchardy: 'Oh, me! It is above all the words that I admire; they have something of passionate, of romantic—"ze-ese glâ-âves,

zese glâ-âves, zey do not belong to me." I don't know what that means, but I love that sort of—of—of—of—*je ne sais quoi*, in short! Just *once* more, l'Anglais; only *once*, the *four couplets*."

So he sang it a third time, all four verses, while they leisurely ate and drank and smoked and looked at each other, nodding solemn commendation of certain phrases in the song: 'Très bien!' 'Très bien!' 'Ah! voilà qui est bien réussi!' 'Épatant, ça!' 'Très fin!' etc. etc. For, stimulated by success, and rising to the occasion, he did his very utmost to surpass himself in emphasis of gesture and accent and histrionic drollery—heedless of the fact that not one of his listeners had the slightest notion what his song was about.

It was a sorry performance.

And it was not till he had sung it four times that he discovered the whole thing was an elaborate impromptu farce, of which he was the butt, and that of all his royal spread not a crumb or a drop was left for himself.

It was the old fable of the fox and the crow! And to do him justice, he laughed as heartily as any one, as if he thoroughly enjoyed the joke—and when you take jokes in that way people soon leave off poking fun at you. It is almost as good as being very big, like Taffy, and having a choleric blue eye!

Such was Little Billee's first experience of Carrel's studio, where he spent many happy mornings and made many good friends.

No more popular student had ever worked there within the memory of the grayest graybeards; none more amiable, more genial, more cheerful, self-respecting, considerate, and polite, and certainly none with greater gifts for art.

Carrel would devote at least fifteen minutes to him, and invited him often to his own private studio. And often, on the fourth or fifth day of the week, a group of admiring students would be gathered by his easel watching him as he worked.

'C'est un rude lapin, l'Anglais! au moins il sait son orthographe en peinture, ce coco-là!'

Such was the verdict on Little Billee at Carrel's studio; and I can conceive no much loftier praise.

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Young as she was (seventeen or eighteen, or thereabouts), and also tender (like Little Billee), Trilby had singularly clear and quick perceptions in all matters that concerned her tastes, fancies, or affections, and thoroughly knew her own mind, and never lost much time in making it up.

On the occasion of her first visit to the studio in the Place St. Anatole des Arts, it took her just five minutes to decide that it was quite the nicest, homeliest, genialest, jolliest studio in the whole Quartier Latin, or out of it, and its three inhabitants, individually and collectively, were more to her taste than any one else she had ever met.

In the first place, they were English, and she loved to hear her

mother-tongue and speak it. It awoke all manner of tender recollections, sweet reminiscences of her childhood, her parents, her old home—such a home as it was—or, rather, such homes; for there had been many flittings from one poor nest to another. The O'Ferralls had been as birds on the bough.

She had loved her parents very dearly; and, indeed, with all their faults, they had many endearing qualities—the qualities that so often go with those particular faults—charm, geniality, kindness, warmth of heart, the constant wish to please, the generosity that comes before justice, and lends its last sixpence and forgets to pay its debts!

She knew other English and American artists, and had sat to them frequently for the head and hands; but none of these, for general agreeableness of aspect or manner, could compare in her mind with the stalwart and magnificent Taffy, the jolly fat Laird of Cockpen, the refined, sympathetic, and elegant Little Billee; and she resolved that she would see as much of them as she could, that she would make herself at home in that particular studio, and necessary to its *locataires*; and without being the least bit vain or self-conscious, she had no doubts whatever of her power to please—to make herself both useful and ornamental if it suited her purpose to do so.

Her first step in this direction was to borrow Père Martin's basket and lantern and pick (he had more than one set of these trade properties) for the use of Taffy, whom she feared she might have offended by the freedom of her comments on his picture.

Then, as often as she felt it to be discreet, she sounded her war-cry at the studio door and went in and made kind inquiries, and, sitting cross-legged on the model-throne, ate her bread and cheese and smoked her cigarette and 'passed the time of day,' as she chose to call it; telling them all such news of the Quartier as had come within her own immediate ken. She was always full of little stories of other studios, which to do her justice, were always good-natured, and probably true—quite so, as far as she was concerned; she was the most literal person alive; and she told all these *ragots, cancans, et potins d'atelier* in a quaint and amusing manner. The slightest look of gravity or boredom on one of those three faces, and she made herself scarce at once.

She soon found opportunities for usefulness also. If a costume were wanted, for instance, she knew where to borrow it, or hire it or buy it cheaper than any one anywhere else. She procured stuffs for them at cost price, as it seemed, and made them into draperies and female garments of any kind that was wanted, and sat in them for the toreador's sweetheart (she made the mantilla herself), for Taffy's starving dressmaker about to throw herself into the Seine, for Little Billee's studies of the beautiful French peasant girl in his picture, now so famous, called 'The Pitcher Goes to the Well.'

Then she darned their socks and mended their clothes, and got

all their washing done properly and cheaply at her friend Madame Boisse's, in the Rue des Cloîtres Ste. Pétronille.

And then again, when they were hard up and wanted a good round sum of money for some little pleasure excursion, such as a trip to Fontainebleau or Barbizon for two or three days, it was she who took their watches and scarf-pins and things to the Mount of Piety in the Street of the Well of Love (where dwelt *ma tante*, which is French for 'my uncle' in this connection), in order to raise the necessary funds.

She was, of course, most liberally paid for all these little services, rendered with such pleasure and goodwill—far too liberally, she thought. She would have been really happier doing them for love.

Thus in a very short time she became a *persona gratissima*—a sunny and ever-welcome vision of health and grace and liveliness and unalterable good-humour, always ready to take any trouble to please her beloved 'Angliches,' as they were called by Madame Vinard, the handsome shrill-voiced *concierge*, who was almost jealous; for she was devoted to the Angliches too—and so was Monsieur Vinard—and so were the little Vinards.

She knew when to talk and when to laugh and when to hold her tongue; and the sight of her sitting crosslegged on the model-throne darning the Laird's socks or sewing buttons on his shirts or repairing the smoke-holes in his trousers was so pleasant that it was painted by all three. One of these sketches (in water-colour by Little Billee) sold the other day at Christie's for a sum so large that I hardly dare to mention it. It was done in an afternoon.

Sometimes on a rainy day, when it was decided they should dine at home, she would fetch the food and cook it, and lay the cloth, and even make the salad. She was a better saladist than Taffy, a better cook than the Laird, a better caterer than Little Billee. And she would be invited to take her share in the banquet. And on these occasions her tremulous happiness was so immense that it would be quite pathetic to see—almost painful; and their three British hearts were touched by thoughts of all the loneliness and homelessness, the expatriation, the half-conscious loss of caste, that all this eager childish clinging revealed.

And that is why (no doubt) that with all this familiar intimacy there was never any hint of gallatry or flirtation in any shape or form whatever—*bonne camaraderie voilà tout*. Had she been Little Billee's sister she could not have been treated with more real respect. And her deep gratitude for this unwonted compliment transcended any passion she had ever felt. As the good Lafontaine so prettily says—

'Ces animaux vivaient entre eux comme cousins;
Cette union si douce, et presque fraternelle,
Edifiait tous les voisins!'

And then their talk! It was to her as the talk of the gods in Olympus, save that it was easier to understand, and she could always

understand it. For she was a very intelligent person, in spite of her wofully neglected education, and most ambitious to learn—a new ambition for her.

So they lent her books—English books: Dickens, Thackeray, Walter Scott—which she devoured in the silence of the night, the solitude of her little attic in the Rue des Pousse-Cailloux, and new worlds were revealed to her. She grew more English every day; and that was a good thing.

Trilby speaking English and Trilby speaking French were two different beings. Trilby's English was more or less that of her father, a highly-educated man; her mother, who was a Scotchwoman,



CUISINE BOURGEOISE EN BOHEME.

although an uneducated one, had none of the ungainliness that mars the speech of so many Englishwomen in that humble rank—no droppings of the *h*, no broadening of the *o*'s and *a*'s.

Trilby's French was that of the Quartier Latin—droll, slangy, piquant, quaint, picturesque—quite the reverse of ungainly, but in which there was scarcely a turn of phrase that would not stamp the speaker as being hopelessly, emphatically 'no lady!' Though it was funny without being vulgar, it was perhaps a little *too* funny!

And she handled her knife and fork in the dainty English way, as no doubt her father had done—and his; and, indeed, when alone with them she was so absolutely 'like a lady' that it seemed quite

odd (though very seductive) to see her in a grisette's cap and dress and apron. So much for her English training.

But enter a Frenchman or two, and a transformation effected itself immediately—a new incarnation of Trilbyness—so droll and amusing that it was difficult to decide which of her two incarnations was the more attractive.

It must be admitted that she had her faults—like Little Billee.

For instance, she would be miserably jealous of any other woman who came to the studio, to sit or scrub or sweep or do anything else, even of the dirty tipsy old hag who sat for Taffy's 'Found drowned'—'as if she couldn't have sat for it herself!'

And then she would be cross and sulky, but not for long—an injured martyr, soon ready to forgive and be forgiven.

She would give up any sitting to come and sit to her three English friends. Even Durien had serious cause for complaint.

Then her affection was exacting: she always wanted to be told one was fond of her, and she dearly loved her own way, even in the sewing on of buttons and the darning of socks, which was innocent enough. But when it came to the cutting and fashioning of garments for a toreador's bride, it was a nuisance not to be borne!

'What could *she* know of toreadors' brides and their wedding-dresses?' the Laird would indignantly ask—as if he were a toreador himself; and this was the aggravating side of her irrepressible Trilbyness.

In the caressing, demonstrative tenderness of her friendship she 'made the soft eyes' at all three indiscriminately. But sometimes Little Billee would look up from his work as she was sitting to Taffy or the Laird, and find her gray eyes fixed on him with an all-enfolding gaze, so piercingly, penetratingly, unutterably sweet and kind and tender, such a brooding, dovelike look of soft and warm solicitude, that he would feel a flutter at his heart, and his hand would shake so that he could not paint; and in a waking dream he would remember that his mother had often looked at him like that when he was a small boy, and she a beautiful young woman untouched by care or sorrow; and the tear that always lay in readiness so close to the corner of Little Billee's eye would find it very difficult to keep itself in its proper place—unshed.

And at such moments the thought that Trilby sat for the figure would go through him like a knife.

She did not sit promiscuously to anybody who asked, it is true. But she still sat to Durien; to the great Gérôme; to M. Carrel, who scarcely used any other model.

It was poor Trilby's sad distinction that she surpassed all other models as Calypso surpassed her nymphs; and whether by long habit, or through some obtuseness in her nature, or lack of imagination, she was equally unconscious of self with her clothes on or without! Truly, she could be naked and unashamed—in this respect an absolute savage.

She would have ridden through Coventry, like Lady Godiva—but without giving it a thought beyond wondering why the streets were empty and the shops closed and the blinds pulled down—would even have looked up to Peeping Tom's shutter with a friendly nod, had she known he was behind it.

In fact, she was absolutely without that kind of shame, as she was without any kind of fear. But she was destined soon to know both fear and shame.

And here it would not be amiss for me to state a fact well known



'THE SOFT EYES'

to all painters and sculptors who have used the nude model (except a few shady pretenders, whose purity, not being of the right sort, has gone rank from too much watching), namely, that nothing is so chaste as nudity. Venus herself, as she drops her garments and steps on to the model-throne, leaves behind her on the floor every weapon in her armoury by which she can pierce to the grosser passions of man. The more perfect her unveiled beauty, the more keenly it appeals to his higher instincts. And where her beauty fails (as it almost always does somewhere in the Venuses who sit for hire), the failure is so lamentably conspicuous in the studio light—the fierce light that beats on this particular throne—that Don Juan himself, who has not got to paint, were fain to hide his eyes in sorrow and disenchantment, and fly to other climes.

All beauty is sexless in the eyes of the artist at his work—the

beauty of man, the beauty of woman, the heavenly beauty of the child, which is the sweetest and best of all.

Indeed it is woman, lovely woman, whose beauty falls the shortest, for sheer lack of proper physical training.

As for Trilby, G——, to whom she sat for his Phryne, once told me that the sight of her thus was a thing to melt Sir Galahad, yet sober Silenus, and chasten Jove himself—a thing to Quixotise a modern French masher! I can well believe him. For myself, I only speak of Trilby as I have seen her—clothed and in her right mind. She never sat to me for any Phryne, never bared herself to me, nor did I ever dream of asking her. I would as soon have asked the Queen of Spain to let me paint her legs! But I have worked from many female models in many countries, some of them the best of their kind. I have also, like Svengali, seen Taffy 'trying to get himself clean', either at home or in the swimming-baths of the Seine; and never a sitting woman among them all who could match for grace or finish or splendour of outward form that mighty Yorkshireman sitting in his tub, or sunning himself, like Ilyssus, at the Bains Henri Quatre, or taking his running header *à la hussarde*, off the springboard at the Bains Deligny, with a group of wondering Frenchmen gathered round.

Up he shot himself into mid-air with a sounding double downward kick, parabolically; then, turning a splendid semi-demi-somersault against the sky, down he came headlong, his body straight and stiff as an arrow, and made his clean hole in the water without splash or sound, to reappear a hundred yards farther on!

'Sac à papier! quel gaillard que cet Anglais, hein?'

'A-t-on jamais vu un torse pareil!'

'Et les bras, donc!'

'Et les jambes, nom d'un tonnerre!'

'Mâtin! J'aimerais mieux être en colère contre lui qu'il ne soit en colère contre moi!' etc. etc. etc.

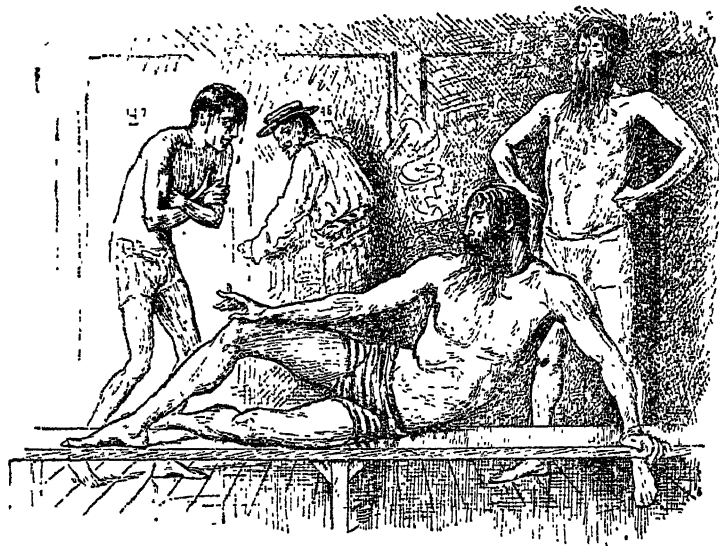
Omne ignotum pro magnifico!

If our climate were such that we could go about without any clothes on, we probably should; in which case, although we should still murder and lie and steal and bear false witness against our neighbour, and break the Sabbath Day, and take the Lord's name in vain, much deplorable wickedness of another kind would cease to exist for sheer lack of mystery; and Christianity would be relieved of its hardest task in this sinful world, and Venus Aphrodite (*alias* Aselgeia) would have to go a-begging along with the tailors and dress-makers and bootmakers, and perhaps our bodies and limbs would be as those of the Theseus and Venus of Milo; who was no Venus, except in good looks!

At all events, there would be no cunning, cruel deceptions, no artful taking in of artless inexperience, no unduly hurried waking-up from Love's young dream, no handing down to posterity of hidden uglinesses and weaknesses, and worse!

And also many a flower, now born to blush unseen, would be reclaimed from its desert, and suffered to hold its own, and flaunt away with the best in the inner garden of roses! And poor Miss Gale, the figure-model, would be permitted to eke out her slender earnings by teaching calisthenics and deportment to the daughters of the British upper middle-class at Miss Pinkerton's academy for young ladies, The Mall, Chiswick.

And here let me humbly apologise to the casual reader for the length and possible irrelevancy of this digression, and for its subject. To those who may find matter for sincere disapprobation or even grave offence in a thing that has always seemed to me so simple, so commonplace, as to be hardly worth talking or writing about,



ILYSSUS

I can only plead a sincerity equal to theirs, and as deep a love and reverence for the gracious, goodly shape that God is said to have made after His own image for inscrutable purposes of His own.

Nor, indeed, am I pleading for such a subversive and revolutionary measure as the wholesale abolition of clothes, being the chillest of mortals, and quite unlike Mr. Theseus of Mr. Ilyssus either.

Sometimes Trilby would bring her little brother to the studio in the Place St. Anatole des Arts, in his *beaux habits de Pâques*, his hair well curled and pomatumed, his hands and face well washed.

He was a very engaging little mortal. The Laird would fill his pockets full of Scotch goodies, and paint him as a little Spaniard in 'Le Fils du Toréador,' a sweet little Spaniard with blue eyes,

and curly locks as light as tow, and a complexion of milk and roses, in singular and piquant contrast to his swarthy progenitors.

Taffy would use him as an Indian club or a dumb-bell, to the child's infinite delight, and swing him on the trapeze, and teach him *la boxe*.

And the sweetness and fun of his shrill, happy, infantile laughter (which was like an echo of Trilby's, only an octave higher) so moved and touched and tickled one that Taffy had to look quite fierce, so he might hide the strange delight of tenderness that somehow filled his manly bosom at the mere sound of it (lest Little Billee and the Laird should think him goody-goody); and the fiercer Taffy looked, the less this small mite was afraid of him.

Little Billee made a beautiful water-colour sketch of him, just as he was, and give it to Trilby, who gave it to le père Martin, who gave it to his wife with strict injunctions not to sell it as an old master. Alas! it is an old master now, and Heaven only knows who has got it!

Those were happy days for Trilby's little brother, happy days for Trilby, who was immensely fond of him, and very proud. And the happiest day of all was when the *trois* Angliches took Trilby and Jeannot (for so the mite was called) to spend the Sunday in the woods at Meudon, and breakfast and dine at the *garde champêtre's*. Swings, peep-shows, donkey-rides; shooting at a mark with cross-bows and little pellets of clay, and smashing little plaster figures and winning macaroons; losing one's self in the beautiful forest; catching newts and tadpoles and young frogs; making music on *mirlitons*. Trilby singing 'Ben Bolt' into a *mirliton* was a thing to be remembered, whether one would or no!

Trilby on this occasion came out in a new character, *en demoiselle*, with a little black bonnet, and a gray jacket of her own making.

To look at (but for her loose, square-toed, heel-less silk boots laced up the inner side), she might have been the daughter of an English dean—until she undertook to teach the Laird some favourite cancan steps. And then the Laird himself, it must be admitted, no longer looked like the son of a worthy, God-fearing, Sabbath-keeping Scotch solicitor.

This was after dinner, in the garden, at *la loge du garde champêtre*. Taffy and Jeannot and Little Billee made the necessary music on their *mirlitons*, and the dancing soon became general, with plenty also to look on, for the *garde* had many costumers who dined there on summer Sundays.

It is no exaggeration to say that Trilby was far and away the belle of that particular ball, and there have been worse balls in much finer company, and far plainer women!

Trilby lightly dancing the cancan (there are cancans and cancans) was a singularly gainly and seductive person—*et vera incessu patuit dea*! Here, again, she was funny without being vulgar. And for mere grace (even in the cancan), she was the forerunner of Miss

Kate Vaughan; and for sheer fun, the precursor of Miss Nelly Farren!

And the Laird, trying to dance after her ('dongsong le konkong,' as he called it), was too funny for words; and if genuine popular success is a true test of humour, no greater humorist ever danced a *pas seul*.

What Englishmen could do in France during the fifties, and yet manage to preserve their self-respect, and even the respect of their respectable French friends!

'Voilà l'espayce de hom ker jer swee!' said the Laird, every time he bowed in acknowledgment of the applause, that greeted his performance of various solo steps of his own—Scotch reels and sword-dances that came in admirably....

Then, one fine day (as a judgment on him, no doubt), the Laird fell ill, and the doctor had to be sent for, and he ordered a nurse. But Trilby would hear of no nurses, not even a Sister of Charity! She did all the nursing herself, and never slept a wink for three successive days and nights.

On the third day the Laird was out of all danger, the delirium was past, and the doctor found poor Trilby fast asleep by the bedside.

Madame Vinard, at the bedroom door, put her finger to her lips, and whispered: 'Quel bonheur! il est sauvé, M. le Docteur; écoutez! il dit ses prières en Anglais, ce brave garçon!'

The good old doctor, who didn't understand a word of English, listened, and heard the Laird's voice, weak and low, but quite clear, and full of heartfelt fervour, intoning, solemnly:

"Green herbs, red peppers, mussels, saffron,
Soles, onions, garlic, roach, and dace—
All these you eat at Terré's Tavern
In that one dish of bouillabaisse!"

'Ah! mais c'est très bien de sa part, ce brave jeune homme! rendre grâces au ciel comme cela, quand le danger est passé! très bien, très bien!'

Sceptic and Voltairian as he was, and not the friend of prayer, the good doctor was touched, for he was old, and therefore kind and tolerant, and made allowances.

And afterwards he said such sweet things to Trilby about it all, and about her admirable care of his patient, that she positively wept with delight—like sweet Alice with hair so brown, whenever Ben Bolt gave her a smile.

All this sounds very goody-goody, but it's true.

So it will be easily understood how the *trois* Angliches came in time to feel for Trilby quite a peculiar regard, and looked forward with sorrowful forebodings to the day when this singular and pleasant quartet would have to be broken up, each of them to spread his wings and fly away on his own account, and poor Trilby to be left behind all by herself. They would even frame little plans whereby she might better herself in life, and avoid the many snares and pitfalls that would beset her lonely path in the Quartier Latin when they were gone.

Trilby never thought of such things as these; she took short views of life, and troubled herself about no morrows.

There was, however, one jarring figure in her little fool's paradise, a baleful and most ominous figure that constantly crossed her path, and came between her and the sun, and threw its shadow over her, and that was Svengali.

He also was a frequent visitor at the studio in the Place St. Anatole, where much was forgiven him for the sake of his music, especially when he came with Gecko and they made music together. But it soon became apparant that they did not come there to play to the three Angliches; it was to see Trilby, whom they both had taken it into their heads to adore, each in a different fashion:

Gecko, with a humble, doglike worship that expressed itself in mute, pathetic deference and looks of lowly self-depreciation, of apology for his own unworthy existence, as though the only requital he would ever dare to dream of were a word of decent politeness, a glance of tolerance or good-will—a mere bone to a dog.

Svengali was a bolder wooer. When he cringed, it was with a mock humility full of sardonic threats; when he was playful, it was with a terrible playfulness, like that of a cat with a mouse—a weird, ungainly cat, and most unclean; a sticky, haunting, long, lean, uncanny, black spider-cat, if there is such an animal outside a bad dream.

It was a great grievance to him that she had suffered from no more pains in her eyes. She had; but preferred to endure them rather than seek relief from *him*.

So he would playfully try to mesmerise her with his glance, and sidle up nearer and nearer to her, making passes and counter-passes, with stern command in his eyes, till she would shake and shiver and almost sicken with fear, and all but feel the spell come over her, as in a nightmare, and rouse herself with a great effort and escape.

If Taffy were there he would interfere with a friendly 'Now then, old fellow, none of that!' and a jolly slap on the back, which would make Svengali cough for an hour, and paralyse his mesmeric powers for a week.

Svengali had a stroke of good-fortune. He played at three grand concerts with Gecko, and had a well-deserved success. He even gave a concert of his own, which made a furore, and blossomed out into beautiful and costly clothes of quite original colour and shape and pattern, so that people would turn round and stare at him in the street—a thing he loved. He felt his fortune was secure, and ran into debt with tailors, hatters, shoemakers, jewellers, but paid none of his old debts to his friends. His pockets were always full of printed slips—things that had been written about him in the papers—and he would read them aloud to everybody he knew, especially to Trilby, as she sat darning socks on the model-throne while the fencing and boxing were in train. And he would lay his

fame and his fortune at her feet, on condition that she should share her life with him.

'Ach, himmel, Drilpy!' he would say, 'you don't know what it is to be a great pianist like me—*hein?* What is your Little Billee, with his stinking oil-bladders, sitting mum in his corner, his mahlstick and his palette in one hand, and his twiddling little footle pig's-hair brush in the other! What noise does *he* make? When his little fool of a picture is finished he will send it to London, and they will hang it on a wall with a lot of others, all in a line, like recruits called out for inspection, and the yawning public will walk by in procession and inspect, and say "damn!" Svengali will go to London *himself*. Ha! ha! He will be all alone on a platform, and play as nobody else can play; and hundreds of beautiful Engländerinnen will see and hear and go mad with love for him—Prinzessen, Comtessen, Serene English Altessen. They will soon lose their Serenity and their Highness when they hear Svengali! They will invite him to their palaces, and pay him a thousand francs to play for them; and after, he will loll in the best armchair, and they will sit all round him on footstools, and bring him tea and gin and *küchen* and *marrons glacés*, and lean over him and fan him—for he is tired after playing them for a thousand francs of Chopin! Ha, ha! I know all about it—*hein?*

'And he will not look at them, even! He will look inward, at his own dream—and his dream will be about Drilpy—to lay his talent, his glory, his thousand francs at her beautiful white feet!

'Their stupid, big, fat, tow-headed, putty-nosed husbands will be mad with jealousy, and long to box him, but they will be afraid. Ach! those beautiful Anclaises! they will think it an honour to mend his shirts, to sew buttons on his pantaloons; to darn his socks, as you are doing now for that sacred imbecile of a Scotchman who is always trying to paint toréadors, or that sweating, pig-headed bullock of an Engländer who is always trying to get himself dirty and then to get himself clean again!—*e da capo!*

'Himmel! what big socks are those! what potato-sacks!'

'Look at your Taffy! what is he good for but to bang great musicians on the back with his big bear's paw! He finds that droll, the bullock!

'Look at your Frenchman there—your damned conceited *verfluchte* pig-dogs of Frenchmen—Durien, Barizel, Bouchardy! What can a Frenchman talk of, *hein?* Only himself, and run down everybody else! His vanity makes me sick! He always thinks the world is talking about *him*, the fool! He forgets that there is a fellow called *Svengali* for the world to talk about! I tell you, Drilpy, it is about *me* the world is talking—me and nobody else—me, me, me!

'Listen what they say in the *Figaro* (reads it).

'What do you think of that, *hein?* What would your Durien say if people wrote of *him* like that?

'But you are not listening, sapperment! great big she-fool that you are—sheep's-head! Dummkopf! Donnerwetter! you are looking

at the chimney-pots when Svengali talks! Look a little lower down between the houses, on the other side of the river! There is a little ugly gray building there, and inside are eight slanting slabs of brass, all of a row, like beds in a school dormitory, and one fine day you shall lie asleep on one of those slabs—you, Drilpy, who would not listen to Svengali, and therefore lost him!.... And over the middle of you will be a little leather apron, and over your head a little brass tap, and all day long and all night the cold water shall trickle, trickle, trickle all the way down your beautiful white body to your beautiful white feet till they turn green, and your poor, damp, draggled, muddy rags will hang above you from the ceiling for your friends to know you by; drip, drip, drip! But you will have no friends....

'And people of all sorts, strangers, will stare at you through the big plate-glass window—Englanders, chiffonniers, painters and sculptors, workmen, piou-pious, old hags of washerwomen—and say, "Ah! what a beautiful woman was that! Look at her! She ought to be rolling in her carriage and pair!" And just then who should come by, rolling in his carriage and pair, smothered in furs, and smoking a big cigar of the Havana, but Svengali, who will jump out, and push the canaille aside, and say, "Ha! ha! that is la grande Drilpy, who would not listen to Svengali, but looked at the chimney-pots when he told her of his manly love, and—"'

'Hi! damn it, Svengali, what the devil are you talking to Trilby about? You're making her sick; can't you see? Leave off, and go to the piano, man, or I'll come and slap you on the back again!'

Thus would that sweating, pig-headed bullock of an Englander stop Svengali's love-making and release Trilby from bad quarters of an hour.

Then Svengali, who had a wholesome dread of the pig-headed bullock, would go to the piano and make impossible discords, and say: 'Dear Drilpy, come and sing "Pen Polt!" I am thirsting for those so beautiful chest notes! Come!'

Poor Trilby needed little pressing when she was asked to sing, and would go through her lamentable performance, to the great discomfort of Little Billee. It lost nothing of its grotesqueness from Svengali's accompaniment, which was a triumph of cacophony, and he would encourage her—*Très bien, tres bien, ça y est!*

When it was over, Svengali would test her ear, as he called it, and strike the C in the middle and then the F just above, and ask which was the highest; and she would declare they were both exactly the same. It was only when he struck a note in the bass and another in the treble that she could perceive any difference, and said that the first sounded like Père Martin blowing up his wife, and the second like her little godson trying to make the peace between them.

She was quite tone-deaf, and didn't know it; and he would pay her extravagant compliments on her musical talent, till Taffy would say: 'Look here, Svengali, let's hear you sing a song!'

And he would tickle him so masterfully under the ribs that the creature howled and became quite hysterical.

Then Svengali would vent his love of teasing on Little Billee, and pin his arms behind his back and swing him round, saying: 'Himmel! what's this for an arm? It's like a girl's!'

'It's strong enough to paint!' said Little Billee.

'And what's this for a leg? It's like a mahlstick!'



TIT FOR TAT

'It's strong enough to kick, if you don't leave off!'

And Little Billee, the young and tender, would let out his little heel and kick the German's shins; and just as the German was going to retaliate, big Taffy would pin *his* arms and make him sing another song, more discordant than Trilby's—for he didn't dream of kicking Taffy: of that you may be sure!

Such was Svengali—only to be endured for the sake of his music—always ready to vex, frighten, bully, or torment anybody or anything smaller and weaker than himself—from a woman or a child to a mouse or a fly.

PART THIRD

'Par deçà, ne dela la mer
Ne sçay dame ni damoiselle
Qui soit en tous biens parfaits telle—
C'est un songe que d'y penser:
'Dieu! qu'il fait bon la regarder!'

ONE lovely Monday morning in late September, at about eleven or so, Taffy and the Laird sat in the studio—each opposite his picture, smoking, nursing his knee, and saying nothing. The heaviness of Monday weighed on their spirits more than usual, for the three friends had returned late on the previous night from a week spent at Barbizon and in the forest of Fontainebleau—a heavenly week among the painters; Rousseau, Millet, Corot, Daubigny, let us suppose, and others less known to fame this day. Little Billee, especially, had been fascinated by all this artistic life in blouses and sabots and immense straw hats and panamas, and had sworn to himself and to his friends that he would some day live and die there—painting the forest as it is, and peopling it with beautiful people out of his own fancy—leading a healthy outdoor life of simple wants and lofty aspirations.

At length Taffy said; 'Bother work this morning! I feel much more like a stroll in the Luxembourg Gardens and lunch at the Café de l'Odéon, where the omelets are good and the wine isn't blue.'

'The very thing I was thinking of myself,' said the Laird.

So Taffy slipped on his old shooting-jacket and his old Harrow cricket cap, with the peak turned the wrong way, and the Laird put on an old greatcoat of Taffy's that reached to his heels, and a battered straw hat they had found in the studio when they took it; and both sallied forth into the mellow sunshine on the way to Carrel's. For they meant to seduce Little Billee from his work, that he might share in their laziness, greediness, and general demoralisation.

And whom should they meet coming down the narrow turreted Rue Vielle des Trois Mauvais Ladres but Little Billee himself, with an air of general demoralisation so tragic that they were quite alarmed. He had his paint box and field-easel in one hand and his little valise in the other. He was pale, his hat on the back of his head, his hair staring all at sixes and sevens, like a sick Scotch terrier's.

'Good Lord! what is the matter?' said Taffy.

'Oh! oh! oh! she's sitting at Carrel's!'

'Who's sitting at Carrel's?'

'Trilby! sitting to all those ruffians! There she was, just as I

opened the door; I saw her, I tell you! The sight of her was like a blow between the eyes, and I bolted! I shall never go back to that beastly hole again! I'm off to Barbizon, to paint the forest; I was coming round to tell you. Good-bye!...

'Stop a minute—are you mad?' said Taffy, collaring him.

'Let me go, Taffy—let me go, damn it! I'll come back in a week—but I'm going now! Let me go; do you hear?'

'But look here—I'll go with you.'

'No; I want to be alone—quite alone. Let me go, I tell you!'

'I shan't let you go unless you swear to me, on your honour, that you'll write directly you get there, and every day till you come back. Swear!'

'All right; I swear—honour bright! Now there! Good-bye—good-bye; back on Sunday—good-bye!' And he was off.

'Now, what the devil does all that mean?' asked Taffy, much perturbed.

'I suppose he's shocked at seeing Trilby in that guise, or disguise, or unguise, sitting at Carrel's—he's such an odd little chap. And I must say, I'm surprised at Trilby. It's a bad thing for her when we're away. What could have induced her? She never sat in a studio of that kind before. I thought she only sat to Durien and old Carrel.'

They walked for a while in silence.

'Do you know, I've got a horrid idea that the little fool's in love with her!'

'I've long had a horrid idea that *she's* in love with *him*.'

'That would be a very stupid business,' said Taffy.

They walked on, brooding over those two horrid ideas, and the more they brooded, considered, and remembered, the more convinced they became that both were right.

'Here's a pretty kettle of fish!' said the Laird—'and talking of fish, let's go and lunch.'

And so demoralised were they that Taffy ate three omelets without thinking, and the Laird drank two halfbottles of wine, and Taffy three, and they walked about the whole of that afternoon for fear Trilby should come to the studio—and were very unhappy.

This is how Trilby came to sit at Carrel's studio:

Carrel had suddenly taken it into his head that he would spend a week there, and paint a figure among his pupils, that they might see and paint with—and if possible like—him. And he had asked Trilby as a great favour to be the model, and Trilby was so devoted to the great Carrel that she readily consented. So that Monday morning found her there, and Carrel posed her as Ingres's famous figure in his picture called 'La Source,' holding an earthenware pitcher on her shoulder.

And the work began in religious silence. Then in five minutes or so Little Billee came bursting in, and as soon as he caught sigh'

of her he stopped and stood as one petrified, his shoulders up, his eyes staring. Then lifting his arms, he turned and fled.

'Que'est ce qu'il a donc, ce Litrebili?' exclaimed one or two students (for they had turned his English nickname into French).

'Perhaps he's forgotten something,' said another. 'Perhaps he's forgotten to brush his teeth and part his hair!'

'Perhaps he's forgotten to say his prayers!' said Barizel.

'He'll come back, I hope!' exclaimed the master.

And the incident gave rise to no further comment.

But Trilby was much disquieted, and fell to wondering what on earth was the matter.

At first she wondered in French: French of the Quartier Latin. She had not seen Little Billee for a week, and wondered if he were ill. She had looked forward so much to his painting her—painting her beautifully—and hoped he would soon come back, and lose no time.

Then she began to wonder in English—nice clean English of the studio in the Place St. Anatole des Arts—her father's English—and suddenly a quick thought pierced her through and through, and made the flesh tingle on her insteps and the backs of her hands, and bathed her brow and temples with sweat.

She had good eyes, and Little Billee had a singularly expressive face

Could it possibly be that he was *shocked* at seeing her sitting there?

She knew that he was peculiar in many ways. She remembered that neither he nor Taffy nor the Laird had ever asked her to sit for the figure, though she would have been only too delighted to do so for them. She also remembered how Little Billee had always been silent whenever she alluded to her posing for the 'altogether,' as she called it, and had sometimes looked pained and always very grave.

She turned alternately pale and red, pale and red all over, again and again, as the thought grew up in her—and soon the growing thought became a torment.

This new-born feeling of shame was unendurable—its birth a travail that racked and rent every fibre of her moral being, and she suffered agonies beyond anything she had ever felt in her life.

'What is the matter with you, my child? Are you ill?' asked Carrel, who, like every one else, was very fond of her, and to whom she had sat as a child ('L'Enfance de Psyché,' now in the Luxembourg Gallery, was painted from her).

She shook her head, and the work went on.

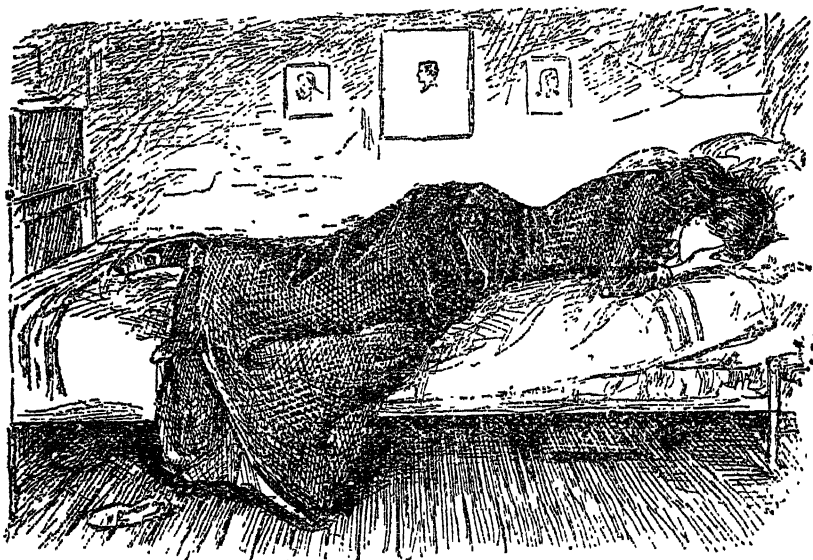
Presently she dropped her pitcher, that broke into bits; and putting her two hands to her face she burst into tears and sobs—and there, to the amazement of everybody, she stood crying like a big baby—*La source aux larmes*?

'What is the matter, my poor dear child?' said Carrel, jumping up and helping her off the throne.

'Oh, I don't know—I don't know—I'm ill—very ill—let me go home!'

And with kind solicitude and despatch they helped her on with her clothes, and Carrel sent for a cab and took her home.

And on the way she dropped her head on his shoulder, and wept, and told him all about it as well as she could, and Monsieur Carrel had tears in his eyes too, and wished to Heaven he had never induced her to sit for the figure, either then or at any other time. And pondering deeply and sorrowfully on such terrible responsibility (he had grown-up daughters of his own), he went back to the studio; and in an hour's time they got another model and another



REPENTANCE

pitcher, and went to work again. So the pitcher went to the well once more.

And Trilby, as she lay disconsolate on her bed all that day and all the next, and all the next again, thought of her past life with agonies of shame and remorse that made the pain in her eyes seem as a light and welcome relief. For it came, and tortured worse and lasted longer than it had ever done before. But she soon found, to her miserable bewilderment, that mind-aches are the worst of all.

Then she decided that she must write to one of the *trois* Angliches, and chose the Laird.

She was more familiar with him than with the other two; it was impossible not to be familiar with the Laird if he liked one, as he was so easy-going and demonstrative, for all that he was such a canny Scot! Then she had nursed him through his illness; she had often hugged and kissed him before the whole studio full of people—

and even when alone with him it had always seemed quite natural for her to do so. It was like a child caressing a favourite young uncle or elder brother. And though the good Laird was the least susceptible of mortals, he would often find these innocent blandishments a somewhat trying ordeal! She had never taken such a liberty with Taffy; and as for Little Billee, she would sooner have died!

So she wrote to the Laird. I give her letter without the spelling, which was often faulty, although her nightly readings had much improved it:

'My dear Friend—I am very unhappy. I was sitting at Carrel's, in the Rue des Potirons, and Little Billee came in, and was so shocked and disgusted that he ran away and never came back.

'I saw it all in his face.

'I sat there because M. Carrel asked me to. He has always been very kind to me—M. Carrel—ever since I was a child; and I would do anything to please him, but never *that* again.

'He was there too.

'I never thought anything about sitting before. I sat first as a child to M. Carrel. Mamma made me, and made me promise not to tell papa, and so I didn't. It soon seemed as natural to sit for people as to run errands for them, or wash and mend their clothes. Papa wouldn't have liked my doing that either, though we wanted the money badly. And so he never knew.

'I have sat for the "altogether" to several other people besides—M. Gérôme, Durien, the two Hennequins, and Émile Baratier; and for the head and hands to lots of people, and for the feet only to Charles Faure, André Besson, Mathieu Dumoulin, and Collinet. Nobody else.

'It seemed as natural for me to sit as for a man. Now I see the awful difference.

'And I have done dreadful things besides, as you must know—as all the Quartier knows. Baratier and Besson; but not Durien, though people think so. Nobody else, I swear—except old Monsieur Penque at the beginning, who was mamma's friend.

'It makes me almost die of shame and misery to think of it; for that's not like sitting. I knew how wrong it was all along—and there's no excuse for me, none. Though lots of people do as bad, and nobody in the Quartier seems to think any the worse of them.

'If you and Taffy and Little Billee cut me, I really think I shall go mad and die. Without your friendship I shouldn't care to live a bit. Dear Sandy, I love your little finger better than any man or woman I ever met; and Taffy's and Little Billee's little fingers too.

'What shall I do? I daren't go out for fear of meeting one of you. Will you come and see me?

'I am never going to sit again, not even for the face and hands. I am going back to be a *blanchisseuse de fin* with my old friend Angèle Boisse, who is getting on very well indeed, in the Rue des Cloîtres Ste. Pétronille.

'You *will* come and see me, won't you? I shall be in all day till you do. Or else I will meet you somewhere, if you will tell me where and when; or else I will go and see you in the studio, if you are sure to be alone. Please don't keep me waiting long for an answer.

'You don't know what I'm suffering.

'Your ever loving, faithful friend,

'Trilby O'Ferrall.'

She sent this letter by hand, and the Laird came in less than ten minutes after she had sent it; and she hugged and kissed and cried over him so that he was almost ready to cry himself; but he burst out laughing instead—which was better and more in his line, and very much more comforting—and talked to her so nicely and kindly and naturally that by the time he left her humble attic in the Rue des Pousse-Cailloux her very aspect, which had quite shocked him when he first saw her, had almost become what it usually was.

The little room under the leads, with its sloping roof and mansard window, was as scrupulously neat and clean as if its tenant had been a holy sister who taught the noble daughters of France at some Convent of the Sacred Heart. There were nasturtiums and mignonette on the outer window-sill, and convolvulus was trained to climb round the window.

As she sat by his side on the narrow white bed, clasping and stroking his painty, turpentine hand, and kissing it every five minutes, he talked to her like a father—as he told Taffy afterwards—and scolded her for having been so silly as not to send for him directly, or come to the studio. He said how glad he was, how glad they would all be, that she was going to give up sitting for the figure—not, of course, that there was any real harm in it, but it was better not—and especially how happy it would make them to feel she intended to live straight for the future. Little Billee was to remain at Barbizon for a little while; but she must promise to come and dine with Taffy and himself that very day, and cook the dinner; and when he went back to his picture, 'Les Noces du Toréador'—saying to her as he left, 'à ce soir donc, mille sacrés tonnerres de nong de Dew!'—he left the happiest woman in the whole Latin Quartier behind him: she had confessed and been forgiven.

And with shame and repentance and confession and forgiveness had come a strange new feeling—that of a dawning self-respect.

Hitherto, for Trilby, self-respect had meant little more than the mere cleanliness of her body, in which she had always revelled; alas! it was one of the conditions of her humble calling. It now meant another kind of cleanliness, and she would luxuriate in it for evermore and the dreadful past—never to be forgotten by her—should be so lived down as in time, perhaps, to be forgotten by others.

The dinner that evening was a memorable one for Trilby. After she had washed up the knives and forks and plates and dishes, and put them by, she sat and sewed. She wouldn't even smoke her

cigarette, it reminded her so of things and scenes she now hated. No more cigarettes for Trilby O'Ferrall.

They all talked of Little Billee. She heard about the way he had been brought up, about his mother and sister, the people he had always lived among. She also heard (and her heart alternately rose and sank as she listened) what his future was likely to be, and how rare his genius was, and how great—if his friends were to be trusted. Fame and fortune would soon be his—such fame and fortune as fall to the lot of very few—unless anything should happen to spoil his promise and mar his prospects in life, and ruin a splendid career; and the rising of the heart was all for him, the sinking for herself. How could she ever hope to be even the friend of such a man? Might she ever hope to be his servant—his faithful, humble servant?

Little Billee spent a month at Barbizon, and when he came back it was with such a brown face that his friends hardly knew him; and he brought with him such studies as made his friends 'sit up.'

The crushing sense of their own hopeless inferiority was lost in wonder at his work, in love and enthusiasm for the workman.

Their Little Billee, so young and tender, so weak of body, so strong of purpose, so warm of heart, so light of hand, so keen and quick and piercing of brain and eye, was their master, to be stuck on a pedestal and looked up to and bowed down to, to be watched and warded and worshipped for evermore.

When Trilby came in from her work at six, and he shook hands with her and said 'Hullo, Trilby!' her face turned pale to the lips, her under lip quivered, and she gazed down at him (for she was among the tallest of her sex) with such a moist, hungry, wide-eyed look of humble craving adoration that the Laird felt his worst fears were realised: and the look Little Billee sent up in return filled the manly bosom of Taffy with an equal apprehension.

Then they all four went and dined together at le père Trin's, and Trilby went back to her *blanchisserie de fin*.

Next day Little Billee took his work to show Carrel, and Carrel invited him to come and finish his picture 'The Pitcher Goes to the Well' at his own private studio—an unheard-of favour, which the boy accepted with a thrill of proud gratitude and affectionate reverence.

So little was seen for some time of Little Billee at the studio in the Place St. Anatole des Arts, and little of Trilby; a *blanchisseuse de fin* has not many minutes to spare from her irons. But they often met at dinner. And on Sunday mornings Trilby came to repair the Laird's linen and darn his socks and look after his little comforts, as usual, and spend a happy day. And on Sunday afternoons the studio would be as lively as ever, with the fencing and boxing, the piano-playing and fiddling—all as it used to be.

And week by week the friends noticed a gradual and subtle change in Trilby. She was no longer slangy in French, unless it

were now and then by a slip of the tongue, no longer so facetious and droll, and yet she seemed even happier than she had ever seemed before.

Also, she grew thinner, especially in the face, where the bones of her cheeks and jaws began to show themselves, and these bones were constructed on such right principles (as were those of her brow and chin and the bridge of her nose) that the improvement was astonishing, almost inexplicable.

Also, she lost her freckles as the summer waned and she herself went less into the open air. And she let her hair grow, and made of it a small knot at the back of her head, and showed her little flat ears, which were charming, and just in the right place, very far back and rather high; Little Billee could not have placed them better himself. Also, her mouth, always too large, took on a firmer and sweeter outline, and her big British teeth were so white and regular that even Frenchmen forgave them their British bigness. And a new soft brightness came into her eyes that no one had ever seen there before. They were stars, just twin gray stars—or rather planets just thrown off by some new sun, for the steady mellow light they gave out was not entirely their own.

Favourite types of beauty change with each succeeding generation. These were the days of Buckner's aristocratic Album beauties, with lofty foreheads, oval faces, little aquiline noses, heart-shaped little mouths, soft dimpled chins, drooping shoulders, and long side ringlets that fell over them—the Lady Arabellas and the Lady Clementinas, Musidoras and Medoras! A type that will perhaps come back to us some day.

May the present scribe be dead!

Trilby's type would be infinitely more admired now than in the fifties. Her photograph would be in the shop-windows. Sir Edward Burne-Jones—if I may make so bold as to say so—would perhaps have marked her for his own, in spite of her almost too exuberant joyousness and irrepressible vitality. Rossetti might have evolved another new formula from her; Sir John Millais another old one of the kind that is always new and never sates or palls—like Clytie, let us say—ever old and ever new as love itself!

Trilby's type was in singular contrast to the type Gavarni had made so popular in the Latin Quarter at the period we are writing of, so that those who fell so readily under her charm were rather apt to wonder why. Moreover, she was thought much too tall for her sex, and her day, and her station in life, and especially for the country she lived in. She hardly looked up to a bold gendarme! and a bold gendarme was nearly as tall as a *dragon de la garde*, who was nearly as tall as an average English policeman. Not that she was a giantess, by any means. She was about as tall as Miss Ellen Terry—and that is a charming height, *I* think.

One day Taffy remarked to the Laird: 'Hang it! I'm blest if Trilby isn't the handsomest woman I know! She looks like a grande

dame masquerading as a grisette—almost like a joyful saint at times. She's lovely! By Jove! I couldn't stand her hugging me as she does you! There'd be a tragedy—say the slaughter of Little Billee.'

'Ah! Taffy, my boy,' rejoined the Laird, 'when those long sister arms are round my neck it isn't *me* she's hugging.'

'And then,' said Taffy, 'what a trump she is! Why she's as upright and straight and honourable as a man! And what she says to one about one's self is always so pleasant to hear! That's Irish, I suppose. And, what's more, it's always true.'

'Ah, that's Scotch!' said the Laird, and tried to wink at Little Billee, but Little Billee wasn't there.

Even Svengali perceived the strange metamorphosis. 'Ach, Drilpy,' he would say, on a Sunday afternoon, 'how beautiful you are! It drives me mad! I adore you. I like you thinner; you have such beautiful bones! Why do you not answer my letters? What! you do not *read* them? You *burn* them? And yet I—— Donnerwetter! I forgot! The grisettes of the Quartier Latin have not learned how to read or write; they have only learned how to dance the cancan with the dirty little pig-dog monkeys they call men. Sacrement! We will teach the little pig-dog monkeys to dance something else some day, we Germans. We will make music for them to dance to! Boum! boum! Better than the waiter at the Café de la Rotonde, *hein?* And the grisettes of the Quartier Latin shall pour us out your little white wine—*fotre petit fin blanc*, as your pig-dog monkey of a poet says, your rotten *verfluchter* De Musset, "who has got such a splendid future behind him!" Bah! What do *you* know of Monsieur Alfred de Musset? We have got a poet too, my Drilpy. His name is Heinrich Heine. If he's still alive, he lives in Paris, in a little street off the Champs Élysées. He lies in bed all day long, and only sees out of one *eye*, like the Countess Hahn-Hahn, ha! ha! He adores French grisettes. He married one. Her name is Mathilde, and she has got *süssen füßen*, like you. He would adore you too, for your beautiful bones; he would like to count them one by one, for he is very playful, like me. And, ach! what a beautiful skeleton you will make! And very soon, too, because you do not smile on your madly-loving Svengali. You burn his letters without reading them! You shall have a nice little mahogany glass case all to yourself in the museum of the École de Médecine, and Svengali shall come in his new fur-lined coat, smoking his big cigar of the Havana, and push the dirty carabins out of the way, and look through the holes of your eyes into your stupid empty skull, and up the nostrils of your high, bony sounding-board of a nose without either a tip or a lip to it, and into the roof of your big mouth, with your thirty-two big English teeth, and between your big ribs into your big chest, where the big leather lungs used to be, and say, "Ach! what a pity she had no more music in her than a big tom-cat!" And then he will look all down

your bones to your poor crumbling feet, and say, "Ach! what a fool she was not answer Svengali's letters!" and the dirty carabins shall——'

'Shut up, you sacred fool, or I'll precious soon spoil *your* skeleton for you.'

Thus the short-tempered Taffy, who had been listening.

Then Svengali, scowling, would play Chopin's funeral march more divinely than ever; and where the pretty soft part comes in, he would whisper to Trilby, 'That is Svengali coming to look at you in your little mahogany glass case!'

And here let me say that these vicious imaginations of Svengali's, which look so tame in English print, sounded much more ghastly in French, pronounced with a Hebrew-German accent, and uttered in his hoarse, rasping, nasal, throaty rook's caw, his big yellow teeth baring themselves in a mongrel canine snarl, his heavy upper eyelids drooping over his insolent black eyes.

Besides which, as he played the lovely melody he would go through a ghoulish pantomime, as though he were taking stock of the different bones in her skeleton with greedy but discriminating approval. And when he came down to the feet, he was almost droll in the intensity of his terrible realism. But Trilby did not appreciate this exquisite fooling, and felt cold all over.

He seemed to her a dread powerful demon, who, but for Taffy (who alone could hold him in check), oppressed and weighed on her like an incubus—and she dreamed of him oftener than she dreamed of Taffy, the Laird, or even Little Billee!

Thus pleasantly and smoothly, and without much change or adventure, things went on till Christmas-time.

Little Billee seldom spoke of Trilby, or Trilby of him. Work went on every morning at the studio in the Place St. Anatole des Arts, and pictures were begun and finished—little pictures that didn't take long to paint—the Laird's Spanish bull-fighting scenes, in which the bull never appeared, and which he sent to his native Dundee and sold there; Taffy's tragic dramas of life in the slums of Paris—starvings, drownings—suicides by charcoal and poison—which he sent everywhere, but did not sell.

Little Billee was painting all this time at Carrel's studio—his private one—and seemed preoccupied and happy when they all met at meal-time, and less talkative even than usual.

He had always been the least talkative of the three; more prone to listen, and no doubt to think the more.

In the afternoon people came and went as usual, and boxed and fenced and did gymnastic feats, and felt Taffy's biceps, which by this time equalled Mr. Sandow's!

Some of these people were very pleasant and remarkable, and have become famous since then in England, France, America—or have died, or married, and come to grief or glory in other ways. It is the Ballad of the Bouillabaisse all over again!

It might be worth while my trying to sketch some of the more noteworthy, now that my story is slowing for a while—like a French train when the engine-driver sees a long curved tunnel in front of him, as I do—and no light at the other end!

My humble attempts at characterisation might be useful as *mémoires pour servir* to future biographers. Besides, there are other reasons, as the reader will soon discover.

There was Durien, for instance—Trilby's especial French adorer, *pour le bon motif!* a son of the people, a splendid sculptor, a very fine character in every way—so perfect, indeed, that there is less to say about him than any of the others—modest, earnest, simple, frugal, chaste, and of untiring industry; living for his art, and perhaps also a little for Trilby, whom he would have been only too glad to marry. He was Pygmalion; she was his Galatea—a Galatea whose marble heart would never beat for *him!*

Durien's house is now the finest in the Parc Monceau; his wife and daughters are the best-dressed women in Paris, and he one of the happiest of men; but he will never quite forget poor Galatea: 'La belle aux pieds d'albâtre—aux deux talons de rose!'

Then there was Vincent, a Yankee medical student, who could both work and play.

He is now one of the greatest oculists in the world, and Europeans cross the Atlantic to consult him. He can still play, and when he crosses the Atlantic himself for that purpose he has to travel incognito like a royalty, lest his play should be marred by work. And his daughters are so beautiful and accomplished that British dukes have sighed after them in vain. Indeed, these fair young ladies spend their autumn holiday in refusing the British aristocracy. We are told so in the society papers, and I can quite believe it. Love is not always blind; and if he is, Vincent is the man to cure him.

In those days he prescribed for us all round, and punched and stethoscoped us, and looked at our tongues for love, and told us what to eat, drink, and avoid, and even where to go for it.

For instance: late one night Little Billee woke up in a cold sweat, and thought himself a dying man—he had felt seedy all day and taken no food; so he dressed and dragged himself to Vincent's hotel, and woke him up, and said, 'Oh, Vincent, Vincent! I'm a dying man!' and all but fainted on his bed. Vincent felt him all over with the greatest care, and asked him many questions. Then, looking at his watch, he delivered himself thus: 'Humph! 3.30! rather late—but still—look here, Little Billee—do you know the Halle on the other side of the water, where they sell vegetables?'

'Oh yes! yes! What vegetable shall I——'

'Listen! On the north side are two restaurants—Bordier and Baratte. They remain open all night. Now go straight off to one of those tuck shops, and tuck in as big a supper as you possibly can. Some people prefer Baratte. I prefer Bordier myself. Per-

haps you'd better try Bordier first and Baratte after. At all events, lose no time; so off you go!

Thus he saved Little Billee from an early grave.

Then there was the Greek, a boy of only sixteen, but six feet high, and looking ten years older than he was, and able to smoke even stronger tobacco than Taffy himself, and colour pipes divinely; he was a great favourite in the Place St. Anatole, for his *bonhomie*, his niceness, his warm geniality. He was the capitalist of this select circle (and nobly lavish of his capital). He went by the name of Poluphloisboiospaleapologos Petrilopetrolicoconose—for so he was christened by the Laird—because his real name was thought much too long; and much too lovely for the Quartier Latin, and reminded one too much of the Isles of Greece—where burning Sappho loved and sang.

What was he learning in the Latin Quarter? French? He spoke French like a native? Nobody knows. But when his Paris friends transferred their Bohemia to London, where were they ever made happier and more at home than in his lordly parental abode—or fed with nicer things?

That abode is now his, and lordlier than ever, as becomes the dwelling of a millionaire and city magnate; and its gray-bearded owner is as genial, as jolly, and as hospitable as in the old Paris days, but he no longer colours pipes.

Then there was Carnegie, fresh from Balliol, redolent of the 'varsity. He intended himself then for the diplomatic service, and came to Paris to learn French as it is spoke; and spent most of his time with his fashionable English friends on the right side of the river, and the rest with Taffy, the Laird, and Little Billee on the left. Perhaps that is why he has not become an ambassador. He is now only a rural dean, and speaks the worst French I know, and speaks it wherever and whenever he can.

It serves him right, I think.

He was fond of lords, and knew some (at least, he gave one that impression), and often talked of them, and dressed so beautifully that even Little Billee was abashed in his presence. Only Taffy, in his threadbare, out-at-elbow shooting-jacket and cricket-cap, and the Laird, in his tattered straw hat and Taffy's old overcoat down to his heels, dared to walk arm-in-arm with him—nay, insisted on doing so—as they listened to the band in the Luxembourg Gardens.

And his whiskers were even longer and thicker and more golden than Taffy's own. But the mere sight of a boxing-glove made him sick.

Then there was the yellow-haired Antony, a Swiss—the idle apprentice, *le roi des truands*, as we called him—to whom every-

thing was forgiven, as to François Villon, *à cause de ses gentilleses*—surely, for all his reprehensible pranks, the gentlest and most lovable creature that ever lived in Bohemia, or out of it.

Always in debt, like Svengali, for he had no more notion of the value of money than a humming-bird, and gave away in reckless generosity to friends what in strictness belonged to his endless creditors; like Svengali, humorous, witty, and a most exquisite and original artist, and also somewhat eccentric in his attire (though scrupulously clean), so that people would stare at him as he walked along—a thing that always gave him dire offence! But, unlike Svengali, full of delicacy, refinement, and distinction of mind and manner, void of any selfconceit; and, in spite of the irregularities of his life, the very soul of truth and honour, as gentle as he was chivalrous and brave; the warmest, staunchest, sincerest, most unselfish friend in the world; and, as long as his purse was full, the best and drollest boon companion in the world—but that was not for ever!

When the money was gone, then would Antony hie him to some beggarly attic in some lost Parisian slum, and write his own epitaph in lovely French or German verse—or even English (for he was an astounding linguist); and telling himself that he was forsaken by family, friends, and mistress alike, look out of his casement over the Paris chimney-pots for the last time, and listen once more to ‘the harmonies of nature,’ as he called it, and ‘aspire towards the infinite,’ and bewail ‘the cruel deceptions of his life,’ and finally lay himself down to die of sheer starvation.

And as he lay and waited for his release, that was so long in coming, he would beguile the weary hours by mumbling a crust ‘watered with his own salt tears,’ and decorating his epitaph with fanciful designs of the most exquisite humour, pathos, and beauty; these early illustrated epitaphs of the young Antony, of which there still exist a goodly number, are now priceless, as all collectors know all over the world.

Fainter and fainter would he grow, and finally, on the third day or thereabouts, a remittance would reach him from some long-suffering sister or aunt in far Lausanne; or else the fickle mistress or faithless friend (who had been looking for him all over Paris) would discover his hiding-place, the beautiful epitaph would be walked off in triumph to le père Marcas in the Rue du Ghetto and sold for twenty, fifty, a hundred francs; and then *vogue la galère!* and back again to Bohemia, dear Bohemia and all its joys, as long as the money lasted.... *e poi, da capo!*

And now that his name is a household word in two hemispheres, and he himself an honour and a glory to the land he has adopted as his own, he loves to remember all this, and look back from the lofty pinnacle on which he sits perched up aloft to the impecunious days of his idle apprenticeship—*le bon temps où l'on était si malheureux!*

And with all that Quixotic dignity of his, so famous is he as a wit that when he jokes (and he is always joking), people laugh first, and then ask what he was joking about, and you can even make your own mild funniments raise a roar by merely prefacing them 'as Antony once said!'

The present scribe has often done so. And if by a happy fluke you should some day hit upon a really good thing of your own—good enough to be quoted—be sure it will come back to you after many days prefaced 'as Antony once said!'

And these jokes are so good-natured that you almost resent their being made at anybody's expence but your own! Never from Antony:

'The aimless jest that striking has caused pain,
The idle word that he'd wish back again!'

Indeed, in spite of his success, I don't suppose he ever made an enemy in his life.

And here let me add (lest there be any doubt as to his identity) that he is now tall and stout and strikingly handsome, though rather bald; and such an aristocrat in bearing, aspect, and manner, that you would take him for a blue-blooded descendant of the Crusaders instead of the son of a respectable burgher in Lausanne.

Then there was Lorrimer, the industrious apprentice, who is now also well pinnacled on high; himself a pillar of the Royal Academy—probably, if he lives long enough, its future president—the duly knighted or baroneted Lord Mayor of 'all the plastic arts' (except one or two perhaps, here and there, that are not altogether without some importance).

May this not be for many, many years! Lorrimer himself would be the first to say so!

Tall, thin, red-haired, and well-favoured, he was a most eager, earnest, and painstaking young enthusiast, of precocious culture, who read improving books, and did not share in the amusements of the Quartier Latin, but spent his evenings at home with Handel, Michael Angelo, and Dante, on the respectable side of the river. Also, he went into good society sometimes, with a dress-coat on, and a white tie, and his hair parted in the middle!

But in spite of these blemishes on his otherwise exemplary record as an art student, he was the most delightful companion—the most affectionate, helpful, and sympathetic of friends. May he live long and prosper!

Enthusiast as he was, he could only worship one god at a time. It was either Michael Angelo, Phidias, Paul Veronese, Tintoret, Raphael, or Titian—never a modern—moderns didn't exist! And so thoroughgoing was he in his worship, and so persistent in voicing it, that he made those immortals quite unpopular in the Place St. Anatoles des Arts. We grew to dread their very names. Each of

them would last him a couple of months or so; then he would give us a month's holiday, and take up another.

Antony did not think much of Lorrimer in those days, nor Lorrimer of him, for all they were such good friends. And neither of them thought much of Little Billee, whose pinnacle (of pure unadulterated fame) is now the highest of all—the highest probably that can be for a mere painter of pictures!

And what is so nice about Lorrimer, now that he is a graybeard, an Academician, an accomplished man of the world and society, is that he admires Antony's genius more than he can say—and reads Mr. Rudyard Kipling's delightful stories as well as Dante's *Inferno*—and can listen with delight to the lovely songs of Signor Tosti, who has not precisely founded himself on Handel—can even scream with laughter at a comic song—even a nigger melody—so, at least, that it but be sung in well-bred and distinguished company—for Lorrimer is no Bohemian.

'Shoo, fly! don'tcher bother me!
For I belong to the Comp'ny G'

Both these famous men are happily (and most beautifully) married—grandfathers for all I know—and 'move in the very best society' (Lorrimer always, I'm told; Antony now and then); *la haute*, as it used to be called in French Bohemia—meaning dukes and lords and even royalties, I suppose, and those who love them, and whom they love!

That is the best society, isn't it? At all events, we are assured it used to be; but that must have been before the present scribe (a meek and somewhat innocent outsider) had been privileged to see it with his own little eye.

And when they happen to meet there (Antony and Lorrimer, I mean), I don't expect they rush very wildly into each other's arms, or talk very fluently about old times. Nor do I suppose their wives are very intimate. None of our wives are. Not even Taffy's and the Laird's.

Oh, Orestes! Oh, Pylades!

Oh, ye impecunious, unpinnaced young inseparables of eighteen, nineteen, twenty, even twenty-five, who share each other's thoughts and purses, and wear each other's clothes, and swear each other's oaths, and smoke each other's pipes, and respect each other's lights o' love, and keep each other's secrets, and tell each other's jokes, and pawn each other's watches and merrymake together on the proceeds, and sit all night by each other's bedsides in sickness, and comfort each other in sorrow and disappointment with silent, manly sympathy—'wait till you get to forty year!'

Wait even till each or either of you gets himself a little pinnacle of his own—be it ever so humble!

Nay, wait till either or each of you gets himself a wife!

History goes on repeating itself, and so do novels, and this is a platitude, and there's nothing new under the sun.

May too cecee (as the idiomatic Laird would say in the language he adores)—may too cecee ay nee eecee nee lâh!

Then there was Dodor, the handsome young *dragon de la garde*—a full private, if you please, with a beardless face, and damaskrosy cheeks, and a small waist, and narrow feet like a lady's, and who, strange to say, spoke English just like an Englishman.

And his friend Gontran, *alias* l'Zouzou—a corporal in the Zouaves.

Both of these worthies had met Taffy in the Crimea, and frequented the studios in the Quartier Latin, where they adored (and were adored by) the grisettes and models, especially Trilby.

Both of them were distinguished for being the worst subjects (*les plus mauvais garnements*) of their respective regiments; yet both were special favourites not only with their fellow-rankers, but with those in command, from their colonels downward.

Both were in the habit of being promoted to the rank of corporal or brigadier, and degraded to the rank of private next day for general misconduct, the result of a too exuberant delight in their promotion.

Neither of them knew fear, envy, malice, temper, or low spirits; ever said or did an ill-natured thing; ever even thought one; ever had an enemy but himself. Both had the best or the worst manners going, according to their company, whose manners they reflected; they were true chameleons!

Both were always ready to share their last ten-sou piece (not that they ever seemed to have one) with each other or anybody else, or anybody else's last ten-sou piece with you; to offer you a friend's cigar; to invite you to dine with any friend they had; to fight with you, or for you, at a moment's notice. And they made up for all the anxiety, tribulation, and sorrow they caused at home by the endless fun and amusement they gave to all outside.

It was a pretty dance they led; but our three friends of the Place St. Anatole (who hadn't got to pay the pipers) loved them both, especially Dodor.

One fine Sunday afternoon Little Billee found himself studying life and character in that most delightful and festive scene la Fête de St. Cloud, and met Dodor and l'Zouzou there, who hailed him with delight, saying:

'Nous allons joliment jubiler, nom d'une pipe!' and insisted on his joining in their amusements and paying for them—roundabouts, swings, the giant, the dwarf, the strong man, the fat woman—to whom they made love and were taken too seriously, and turned out—the menagerie of wild beasts, whom they teased and aggravated till the police had to interfere. Also *al fresco* dances, where their cancan step was of the wildest and most unbridled character, till a *sous-officier* or a gendarme came in sight, and then they danced quite mincingly and demurely, *en maître d'école*, as they called it, to the huge delight of an immense and ever-increasing crowd, and the disgust of all truly respectable men.

They also insisted on Little Billee's walking between them, arm-in-arm, and talking to them in English whenever they saw coming towards them a respectable English family with daughters. It was the dragoon's delight to get himself stared at by fair daughters of Albion for speaking as good English as themselves—a rare accomplishment in a French trooper—and Zouzou's happiness to be thought English too, though the only English he knew was the phrase, 'I will not! I will not!' which he had picked up in the Crimea, and repeated over and over again when he came within ear-shot of a pretty English girl.

Little Billee was not happy in these circumstances. He was no snob. But he was a respectably-brought-up young Briton of the higher middle class, and it was not quite pleasant for him to be seen (by fair country-women of his own) walking arm-in-arm on a Sunday afternoon with a couple of French private soldiers, and uncommonly rowdy ones at that.

Later, they came back to Paris together on the top of an omnibus, among a very proletarian crowd; and there the two facetious warriors immediately made themselves pleasant all round and became very popular, especially with the women and children; but not, I regret to say, through the propriety, refinement, and discretion of their behaviour. Little Billee resolved that he would not go a-pleasuring with them any more.

However, they stuck to him through thick and thin, and insisted on escorting him all the way back to the Quartier Latin by the Pont de la Concorde and the Rue de Lille in the Faubourg St. Germain.

Little Billee loved the Faubourg St. Germain, especially the Rue de Lille. He was fond of gazing at the magnificent old mansions, the *hôtels* of the old French noblesse, or rather the outside walls thereof, the grand sculptured portals with the armorial bearings and the splendid old historic names above them—Hôtel de This, Hôtel de That, Rohan-Chabot, Montmorency, La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, La Tour d'Auvergne.

He would forget himself in romantic dreams of past and forgotten French chivalry which these glorious names called up; for he knew a little of French history, loving to read Froissart and Saint Simon and the genial Brantôme.

Halting opposite one of the finest and oldest of all these gateways, his especial favourite, labelled 'Hôtel de la Rochemartel' in letters of faded gold over a ducal coronet and a huge escutcheon of stone, he began to descant upon its architectural beauties and noble proportions to l'Zouzou.

'*Parbleu!*' said l'Zouzou, '*ccnnu, farceur!* why, I was born there on the 6th of March 1834, at 5.30 in the morning. Lucky day for France—hein?'

'Born there? what do you mean—in the porter's lodge?'

At this juncture the two great gates rolled back, a liveried Suisse

appeared, and an open carriage and pair came out, and in it were two elderly ladies and a younger one.

To Little Billee's indignation, the two incorrigible warriors made the military salute, and the three ladies bowed stiffly and gravely. And then (to Little Billee's horror this time) one of them happened to look back, and Zouzou actually kissed his hand to her.

'Do you *know* that lady?' asked Little Billee, very sternly.

'*Parbleu! si je la connais!* Why, it's my mother! Isn't she nice? She's rather cross with me just now.'

'Your mother! Why, what do you mean? What on earth would your mother be doing in that big carriage and at that big house?'



DODOR IN HIS GLORY

'*Parbleu, farceur!* She lives there!'

'Lives there? Why, who and what is she, your mother?'

'The Duchesse de la Rochemartel, *parbleu!* and that's my sister; and that's my aunt, Princesse de Chevagné-Bauffremont! She's the "*patronne*" of that *chic* equipage. She's a millionaire, my aunt Chevagné!'

'Well, I never! What's your name, then?'

'Oh, my name! Hang it—let me see! Well—Gontran—Xavier—François—Marie—Joseph d'Amaury de Brissac de Roncesvaux de la Rochemartel-Boisségur, at your service!'

'Quite correct!' said Dodor; '*l'enfant dit vrai!*'

'Well—I—never! And what's *your* name, Dodor?'

'Oh! I'm only a humble individual, and answer to the one-horse name of Théodore Rigolot de Lafarce. But Zouzou's an awful swell, you know—his brother's the Duke!'

Little Billee was no snob. But he was a respectably-brought-up young Briton of the higher middle class, and these revelations, which he could not but believe, astounded him so that he could hardly speak. Much as he flattered himself that he scorned the bloated aristocracy, titles are titles—even French titles!—and when it comes to dukes and princesses who live in houses like the Hôtel de la Rochemartel....!

It's enough to take a respectably-brought-up young Briton's breath away.

When he saw Taffy that evening, he exclaimed: 'I say, Zouzou's mother's a duchess!'

'Yes—the Duchesse de la Rochemartel-Boisségur.'

'You never told me!'. . .

'You never asked me. It's one of the greatest names in France. They're very poor, I believe.'

'Poor! You should see the house they live in!'

'I've been there, to dinner; and the dinner wasn't very good. They let a great part of it, and live mostly in the country. The Duke is Zouzou's brother; very unlike Zouzou; he's consumptive and unmarried, and the most respectable man in Paris. Zouzou will be the Duke some day.'

'And Dodor—he's a swell, too, I suppose—he says he's *de* something or other!'

'Yes—Rigolot de Lafarce. I've no doubt he descends from the Crusaders too; the name seems to favour it, anyhow; and such lots of them do in this country. His mother was English, and bore the worthy name of Brown. He was at school in England; that's why he speaks English so well—and behaves so badly, perhaps! He's got a very beautiful sister, married to a man in the 60th Rifles—Jack Reeve, a son of Lord Reevely's; a selfish sort of chap. I don't suppose he gets on very well with his brother-in-law. Poor Dodor! His sister's about the only living thing he cares for—except Zouzou.'

I wonder if the bland and genial Monsieur Théodore—'notre Sieur Théodore'—now junior partner in the great haberdashery firm of 'Passefil et Rigolot,' on the Boulevard des Capucines, and a pillar of the English chapel in the Rue Marbœuf, is very hard on his employés and employées if they are a little late at their counters on a Monday morning?

I wonder if that stuck-up, stingy, stodgy, communard-shooting, church-going, time-serving, place-hunting, pious-eyed, pompous old prig, martinet, and philistine, Monsieur le Maréchal-Duc de la Rochemartel-Boisségur, ever tells Madame la Maréchale-Duchesse (*née* Hunks, of Chicago) how once upon a time Dodor and he—

We will tell no tales out of school.

The present scribe is no snob. He is a respectably-brought-up old Briton of the higher middle class—at least, he flatters himself so. And he writes for just such old philistines as himself, who date from a time when titles were not thought so cheap as to-day. Alas! all reverence for all that is high and time-honoured and beautiful seems at a discount.

So he has kept his blackguard ducal Zouave for the bouquet of this little show—the final *bonne bouche* in his Bohemian *menu*—that he may make it palatable to those who only look upon the good old Quartier Latin (now no more to speak of) as a very low, common, vulgar quarter indeed, deservedly swept away, where misters the students (shocking bounders and cads) had nothing better to do, day and night, than mount up to a horrid place called the thatched house—*la chaumière*—

‘Pour y danser le cancan
Ou le Robert Macaire—
Toujours—toujours—toujours—
La nuit comme le jour . . .
Et youp! youp! youp!
Tra la la la la . . . la la la!’

Christmas was drawing near.

There were days when the whole Quartier Latin would veil its iniquities under fogs almost worthy of the Thames Valley between London Bridge and Westminster, and out of the studio window the prospect was a dreary blank. No Morgue! no towers of Notre Dame! not even the chimney-pots over the way—not even the little mediæval toy turret at the corner of the Rue Vieille des Trois Mauvais Ladres, Little Billee’s delight!

The stove had to be crammed till its sides grew a dull deep red before one’s fingers could hold a brush or squeeze a bladder; one had to box or fence at nine in the morning, that one might recover from the cold bath, and get warm for the rest of the day!

Taffy and the Laird grew pensive and dreamy, child-like and bland; and when they talked it was generally about Christmas at home in Merry England and the distant Land of Cakes, and how good it was to be there at such a time—hunting, shooting, curling, and endless carouse!

It was Ho! for the jolly West Riding, and Hey! for the bonnets of Bonnie Dundee, till they grew quite homesick, and wanted to start by the very next train.

They didn’t do anything so foolish. They wrote over to friends in London for the biggest turkey, the biggest plum-pudding, that could be got for love or money, with mince-pies, and holly and mistle-toe, and sturdy, short, thick English sausages; half a Stilton cheese, and a sirloin of beef—two sirloins, in case one should not be enough.

For they meant to have a Homeric feast in the studio on Christmas Day—Taffy, the Laird, and Little Billee—and invite all the delightful chums I have been trying to describe; and that is just why I

tried to describe them—Durien, Vincent, Antony, Lorrimer, Carnegie, Petrolicoconose, l'Zouzou, and Dodor!

The cooking and waiting should be done by Trilby, her friend Angèle Boisse, M. et Mme. Vinard, and such little Vinards as could be trusted with glass and crockery and mince-pies; and if that was not enough, they would also cook themselves, and wait upon each other.

When dinner should be over, supper was to follow with scarcely any interval to speak of; and to partake of this other guests should be bidden—Svengali and Gecko, and perhaps one or two more. No ladies!

For, as the unsusceptible Laird expressed it, in the language of a gillie he had once met at a servant's dance in a Highland country-house, 'Them wimmen spiles the ball!'

Elaborate cards of invitation were sent out, in the designing and ornamentation of which the Laird and Taffy exhausted all their fancy (Little Billee had no time).

Wines and spirits and English beers were procured at great cost from M. E. Delevingne's, in the Rue St. Honoré, and liqueurs of every description—chartreuse, curaçao, *ratafia de cassis*, and anisette; no expense was spared.

Also, truffled galantines of turkey, tongues, hams, *rillettes de Tours*, *pâtés de foie gras*, *fromage d'Italie* (which has nothing to do with cheese), *saucissons d'Arles et de Lyon*, with and without garlic, cold jellies peppery and salt—everything that French *charcutiers* and their wives can make out of French pigs, or any other animal whatever, beast, bird, or fowl (even cats and rats), for the supper; and sweet jellies, and cakes, and sweetmeats, and confections of all kinds, from the famous pastry-cook at the corner of the Rue Castiglione.

Mouths went watering all day long in joyful anticipation. They water somewhat sadly now at the mere remembrance of these delicious things—the mere immediate sight or scent of which in these degenerate latter days would no longer avail to promote any such delectable secretion. *Helas! ahimè! ach weh! ay de mi! eheu! οἶμοι*—in point of fact, *alas!*

That is the very exclamation I wanted.

Christmas Eve came round. The pieces of resistance and plum-pudding and mince-pies had not yet arrived from London—but there was plenty of time.

Les trois Angliches dined at le père Trin's, as usual, and played billiards and dominoes at the Café du Luxembourg, and possessed their souls in patience till it was time to go and hear the midnight mass at the Madeleine, where Roucouly, the great barytone of the Opéra Comique, was retained to sing Adam's famous Noël.

The whole Quartier seemed alive with the *réveillon*. It was a clear, frosty night, with a splendid moon just past the full, and most exhilarating was the walk along the quays on the Rive Gauche, over the Pont de la Concorde and across the Place thereof, and up the

thronged Rue de la Madeleine to the massive Parthenaic place of worship that always has such a pagan, wordly look of smug and prosperous modernity.

They struggled manfully, and found standing and kneeling room among that fervent crowd, and heard the impressive service with mixed feelings, as became true Britons of very advanced liberal and religious opinions; not with the unmixed contempt of the proper British Orthodox (who were there in full force, one may be sure).



"ALLONS, GLYCÈRE! ROUGIS MON VERRE...."

But their susceptible hearts soon melted at the beautiful music, and in mere sensuous *attendrissement* they were quickly in unison with all the rest.

For as the clock struck twelve out pealed the organ, and up rose the finest voice in France:

'Minuit, Chrétiens! c'est l'heure solennelle
Où l'Homme-Dieu descendit parmi nous!'

And a wave of religious emotion rolled over Little Billee and submerged him; swept him off his little legs, swept him out of his little self, drowned him in a great seething surge of love—love of his kind, love of love, love of life, love of death, love of all that is and ever was and ever will be—a very large order indeed, even for Little Billee.

And it seemed to him that he stretched out his arms for love to one figure especially beloved beyond all the rest—one figure erect on high with arms outstretched to him, in more than common fellowship of need; not the sorrowful figure crowned with thorns, for it was in the likeness of a woman; but never that of the Virgin Mother of Our Lord.

It was Trilby, Trilby, Trilby! a poor fallen sinner and waif all but lost amid the scum of the most corrupt city on earth. Trilby weak and mortal like himself, and in woful want of pardon! and in her gray dove-like eyes he saw the shining of so great a love that he was abashed; for well he knew that all that love was his, and would be his for ever, come what would or could.

'Peuple debout! Chante ta délivrance!
Noël! Noël! Voici le Rédempteur!'

So sang and rang and pealed and echoed the big, deep, metallic barytone bass—above the organ, above the incense, above everything else in the world—till the very universe seemed to shake with the rolling thunder of that great message of love and forgiveness!

Thus at least felt Little Billee, whose way it was to magnify and exaggerate all things under the subtle stimulus of sound, and the singing human voice had especially strange power to penetrate into his inmost depths—even the voice of man!

And what voice but the deepest and gravest and grandest there is can give worthy utterance to such a message as that, the epitome, the abstract, the very essence of all collective humanity's wisdom at its best!

Little Billee reached the Hôtel Corneille that night in a very exalted frame of mind indeed; the loftiest, lowliest mood of all.

Now see what sport we are of trivial, base, ignoble earthly things!

Sitting on the doorstep, and smoking two cigars at once he found Ribot, one of his fellow-lodgers, whose room was just under his own. Ribot was so tipsy that he could not ring. But he could still sing, and did so at the top of his voice. It was not the Noël of Adam that he sang. He had not spent his *réveillon* in any church.

With the help of a sleepy waiter, Little Billee got the bacchanalian into his room and lit his candle for him, and, disengaging himself from his maudlin embraces, left him to wallow in solitude.

As he lay awake in his bed, trying to recall the deep and high emotions of the evening, he heard the tipsy hog below tumbling about his room and still trying to sing his senseless ditty:

'Allons, Glycère!
Rougis mon verre
Du jus divin dont mon cœur est toujours jaloux . . .
Et puis à table,
Bacchante aimable!
Enivrons-nous (hic) Les g-glouloux sont des rendez-vous!' . .

Then the song ceased for a while, and soon there were other sounds, as on a Channel steamer. Glouloux indeed!

Then the fear arose in Little Billee's mind lest the drunken beast should set fire to his bedroom curtains. All heavenly visions were chased away for the night....

Our hero, half crazed with fear, disgust, and irritation, lay wide awake, his nostrils on the watch for the smell of burning chintz or muslin, and wondered how an educated man—for Ribot was a law-student—could ever make such a filthy beast of himself as that! It was a scandal—a disgrace; it was not to be borne; there should be no forgiveness for such as Ribot—not even on Christmas Day! He would complain to Madame Paul, the *patronne*; he would have Ribot turned out into the street; he would leave the hotel himself the very next morning! At last he fell asleep, thinking of all he would do; and thus, ridiculously and ignominiously for Little Billee, ended the *réveillon*.

Next morning he complained to Madame Paul; and though he did not give her warning, nor even insist on the expulsion of Ribot (who, as he heard with a hard heart, was *bien malade ce matin*), he expressed himself very severely on the conduct of that gentleman, and on the dangers from fire that might arise from a tipsy man being trusted alone in a small bedroom with chintz curtains and a lighted candle. If it hadn't been for himself, he told her, Ribot would have slept on the doorstep, and serve him right! He was really grand in his virtuous indignation, in spite of his imperfect French; and Madame Paul was deeply contrite for her peccant lodger, and profuse in her apologies; and Little Billee began his twenty-first Christmas Day like a Pharisee, thanking his star that he was not as Ribot!

PART FOURTH

'Félicité passée
Qui ne peux revenir,
Tourment de ma pensée,
Que n'ay-je, en te perdant, perdu le souvenir!'

MID-DAY had struck. The expected hamper had not turned up in the Place St. Anatole des Arts.

All Madame Vinard's kitchen battery was in readiness; Trilby and Madame Angèle Boisse were in the studio, their sleeves turned up, and ready to begin.

At twelve the *trois Angliches* and the two fair *blanchisseuses* sat down to lunch in a very anxious frame of mind, and finished a *pâté de foi gras* and two bottles of Burgundy between them, such was their disquietude.

The guests had been invited for six o'clock.

Most elaborately they laid the cloth on the table they had borrowed from the Hôtel de Seine, and settled who was to sit next to whom, and then unsettled it, and quarrelled over it—Trilby, as was her wont in such matters, assuming an authority that did not rightly belong to her, and of course getting her own way in the end.

And that, as the Laird remarked, was her confounded Trilbyness.

Two o'clock—three—four—but no hamper! Darkness had almost set in. It was simply maddening. They knelt on the divan, with their elbows on the window-sill, and watched the street-lamps popping into life along the quays—and looked out through the gathering dusk for the van from the Chemin de Fer du Nord—and gloomily thought of the Morgue, which they could still make out across the river.

At length the Laird and Trilby went off in a cab to the station—a long drive—and, lo! before they came back the long-expected hamper arrived, at six o'clock.

And with it Durien, Vincent, Antony, Lorrimer, Carnegie, Petrolicoconose, Dodor, and l'Zouzou—the last two in uniform, as usual.

And suddenly the studio, which had been so silent, dark, and dull, with Taffy and Little Billee sitting hopeless and despondent round the stove, became a scene of the noisiest, busiest, and cheerfullest animation. The three big lamps were lit, and all the Chinese lanterns. The pieces of resistance and the pudding were whisked off by Trilby, Angèle, and Madame Vinard to other regions—the porter's lodge and Durien's studio (which had been lent for the purpose); and every one was pressed into the preparations for the banquet. There was plenty for idle hands to do. Sausages to be fried for the turkey, stuffing made, and sauces, salads mixed, and punch

—holly hung in festoons all round and about—a thousand things. Everybody was so clever and good-humoured that nobody got in anybody's way—not even Carnegie, who was in evening dress (to the Laird's delight). So they made him do the scullion's work—cleaning, rinsing, peeling, etc.

The cooking of the dinner was almost better fun than the eating of it. And though there were so many cooks, not even the broth was spoiled (cockaleekie, from a receipt of the Laird's).

It was ten o'clock before they sat down to that most memorable repast.

Zouzou and Dodor, who had been the most useful and energetic of all its cooks, apparently quite forgot they were due at their respective barracks at that very moment; they had only been able to obtain *la permission de dix heures*. If they remembered it, the certainty that next day Zouzou would be reduced to the ranks for the fifth time, and Dodor confined to his barracks for a month, did not trouble them in the least.

The waiting was as good as the cooking. The handsome, quick, authoritative Madame Vinard was in a dozen places at once, and openly prompted, rebuked, and bullyragged her husband into a proper smartness. The pretty little Madame Angèle moved about as deftly and as quietly as a mouse; which of course did not prevent them both from genially joining in the general conversation whenever it wandered into French.

Trilby, tall, graceful, and stately, and also swift of action, though more like Juno or Diana than Hebe, devoted herself more especially to her own particular favourites—Durien, Taffy, the Laird, Little Billee—and Dodor and Zouzou, whom she loved, and *tutoy'd en bonne camarade* as she served them with all there was of the choicest.

The two little Vinards did their little best—they scrupulously respected the mince-pies, and only broke two bottles of oil and one of Harvey sauce, which made their mother furious. To console them, the Laird took one of them on each knee and gave them of his share of plum-pudding and many other unaccustomed good things, so bad for their little French tumtums.

The genteel Carnegie had never been at such a queer scene in his life. It opened his mind—and Dodor and Zouzou, between whom he sat (the Laird thought it would do him good to sit between a private soldier and a humble corporal), taught him more French than he had learned during the three months he had spent in Paris. It was a specialty of theirs. It was more colloquial than what is generally used in diplomatic circles, and stuck longer in the memory; but it hasn't interfered with his preferment in the Church.

He quite unbent. He was the first to volunteer a song (without being asked) when the pipes and cigars were lit, and after the usual toasts had been drunk—Her Majesty's health, Tennyson, Thackeray, and Dickens; and John Leech.

He sang, with a very cracked and rather hiccupy voice, his only song (it seems)—an English one, of which the burden, he explained, was French:

'Veeverler veeverler veeverler vee
Veeverler companyee!'

And Zouzou and Dodor complimented him so profusely on his French accent that he was with difficulty prevented from singing it all over again.

Then everybody sang in rotation.

The Laird, with a capital barytone, sang

'Hie diddle dee for the Lowlands low,'

which was encored.

Little Billee sang 'Little Billee.'

Vincent sang.

'Old Joe kicking up behind and afore,
And the yaller gal a-licking up behind old Joe.'

A capital song, with words of quite a masterly scansion.

Antony sang 'Le Sire de Framboisy.' Enthusiastic encore.

Lorrimer, inspired no doubt by the occasion, sang the 'Hallelujah Chorus,' and accompanied himself on the piano, but failed to obtain an encore.

Durien sang

'Plaisir d'amour ne dure qu'un moment;
Chagrin d'amour dure toute la vie. . . .'

It was his favourite song, and is one of the beautiful songs of the world, and he sang it very well—and it became popular in the Quartier Latin ever after.

The Greek couldn't sing, and very wisely didn't.

Zouzou sang capitally a capital song in praise of *le vin à quat' sous*!

Taffy, in a voice like a high wind (and with a very good imitation of the Yorkshire brogue), sang a Somersetshire hunting ditty, ending:

'Of this 'ere song should I be axed the reason for to show,
I don't exactly know, I don't exactly know!
But all my fancy dwells upon Nancy,
And I sing 'Tally-ho!'

It is a quite superexcellent ditty, and haunts my memory to this day; and one felt sure that Nancy was a dear and a sweet, wherever she lived, and when. So Taffy was encored twice—once for her sake, once for his own.

And finally, to the surprise of all, the bold dragoon sang (in English) 'My Sister Dear,' out of *Masaniello*, with such pathos, and in a voice so sweet and high and well in tune, that his audience felt almost weepy in the midst of their jollification; and grew quite sentimental, as Englishmen abroad are apt to do when they are rather tipsy and hear pretty music, and think of their dear sister across the sea, or their friends' dear sisters.

Madame Vinard interrupted her Christmas dinner on the model-throne to listen, and wept and wiped her eyes quite openly, and remarked to Madame Boisse, who stood modestly close by: 'Il est gentil tout plein, ce dragon! Mon Dieu! comme il chante bien! Il est Angliche aussi, il paraît. Ils sont joliment bien élevés, tous ces Angliches—tous plus gentils les uns que les autres! et quant à Monsieur Litrebili, on lui donnerait le bon Dieu sans confession!' And Madame Boisse agreed.

Then Svengali and Gecko came, and the table had to be laid and decorated anew, for it was supper-time.

Supper was even jollier than dinner, which had taken off the keen edge of the appetites, so that every one talked at once—the true test of a successful supper—except when Antony told some of his experiences of Bohemia; for instance, how, after staying at home all day for a month to avoid his creditors, he became reckless one Sunday morning, and went to the Bains Deligny, and jumped into a deep part by mistake, and was saved from a watery grave by a bold swimmer, who turned out to be his bootmaker, Satory, to whom he owed sixty francs—of all his duns the one he dreaded the most, and who didn't let him go in a hurry.

Whereupon Svengali remarked that he also owed sixty francs to Satory—'Mais comme che ne me baigne jamais, che n'ai rien à craindre!'

Whereupon there was such a laugh that Svengali felt he had scored off Antony at last, and had a prettier wit. He flattered himself that he'd got the laugh of Antony *this* time.

And after supper Svengali and Gecko made such lovely music that everybody was sobered and athirst again, and the punch-bowl, wreathed with holly and mistletoe, was placed in the middle of the table, and clean glasses set all round it.

Then Dodor and l'Zouzou stood up to dance with Trilby and Madame Angèle, and executed a series of cancan steps, which, though they were so inimitably droll that they had each and all to be encored, were such that not one of them need have brought the blush of shame to the cheek of modesty.

Then the Laird danced a sword-dance over two T-squares and broke them both. And Taffy, baring his mighty arms to the admiring gaze of all, did dumb-bell exercises, with Little Billee for a dumb-bell, and all but dropped him into the punch-bowl; and tried to cut a pewter ladle in two with Dodor's sabre, and sent it through the window; and this made him cross, so that he abused French sabres, and said they were made of worse pewter than even French ladles; and the Laird sententiously opined that they managed these things better in England, and winked at Little Billee.

Then they played at 'cock-fighting,' with their wrists tied across their shins, and a broomstick thrust in between; thus manacled, you are placed opposite your antagonist, and try to upset him with your feet, and he you. It is a very good game. The cuirassier

and the Zouave playing at this got so angry, and were so irresistibly funny a sight, that the shouts of laughter could be heard on the other side of the river, so that a *sergent-de-ville* came in and civilly requested them not to make so much noise. They were disturbing the whole Quartier, he said, and there was quite a *rassemblement* outside. So they made him tipsy, and also another policeman, who came to look after his comrade, and yet another; and these guardians of the peace of Paris were trussed and made to play at cock-fighting, and were still funnier than the two soldiers, and laughed louder and made more noise than any one else, so that Madame Vinard had to remonstrate with them, till they got too tipsy to speak, and fell fast asleep, and were laid next to each other behind the stove.

The *fin-de-siècle* reader, disgusted at the thought of such an orgy as I have been trying to describe, must remember that it happened in the fifties, when men calling themselves gentlemen, and being called so, still wrenched off door-knockers and came back drunk from the Derby, and even drank too much after dinner before joining the ladies, as is all duly chronicled and set down in John Leech's immortal pictures of life and character out of *Punch*.

Then M. and Mme. Vinard and Trilby and Angèle Boisse bade the company good-night, Trilby being the last of them to leave.

Little Billee took her to the top of the staircase, and there he said to her:

'Trilby, I have asked you nineteen times, and you have refused. Trilby, once more, on Christmas night, for the twentieth time—*will* you marry me? If not, I leave Paris to-morrow morning, and never come back. I swear it on my word of honour!'

Trilby turned very pale, and leaned her back against the wall, and covered her face with her hands.

Little Billee pulled them away.

'Answer me, Trilby!'

'God forgive me, yes!' said Trilby, and she ran downstairs, weeping.

It was now very late.

It soon became evident that Little Billee was in extraordinarily high spirits—in an abnormal state of excitement.

He challenged Svengali to spar, and made his nose bleed, and frightened him out of his sardonic wits. He performed wonderful and quite unsuspected feats of strength. He swore eternal friendship to Dodor and Zouzou, and filled their glasses again and again, and also (in his innocence) his own, and *tringuéd* with them many times running. They were the last to leave (except the three helpless policeman); and at about five or six in the morning, to his surprise, he found himself walking between Dodor and Zouzou by a late windy moonlight in the Rue Vieille des Trois Mauves Ladres,

now on one side of the frozen gutter, now on the other, now in the middle of it, stopping them now and then to tell them how jolly they were and how dearly he loved them.

Presently his hat flew away, and went rolling and skipping and bounding up the narrow street, and they discovered that as soon as they let each other go to run after it, they all three sat down.

So Dodor and Little Billee remained sitting, with their arms



“ANSWER ME, TRILBY!”

round each other's necks and their feet in the gutter, while Zouzou went after the hat on all fours, and caught it, and brought it back in his mouth like a tipsy retriever. Little Billee wept for sheer love and gratitude, and called him a *caryatide* (in English), and laughed loudly at his own wit, which was quite thrown away on Zouzou! ‘No man ever *had* such dear, dear frengé! no man ever *was* s’happy!’

After sitting for a while in love and amity, they managed to get up on their feet again, each helping the other; and in some never-to-be-remembered way they reached the Hôtel Corneille.

There they sat Little Billee on the door-step and rang the bell, and seeing some one coming up the Place de l’Odéon, and fearing he

might be a *sergent-de-ville*, they bid Little Billee a most affectionate but hasty farewell, kissing him on both cheeks in French fashion, and contrived to get themselves round the corner and out of sight.

Little Billee tried to sing Zouzou's drinking-song:

'Quoi de plus doux
Que les glougloux—
Les glougloux du vin à quat' sous. . . .'

The stranger came up. Fortunately, it was no *sergent-de-ville*, but Ribot, just back from a Christmas-tree and a little family dance at his aunt's, Madame Kolb (the Alsatian banker's wife, in the Rue de la Chaussée d'Antin).

Next morning poor Little Billee was dreadfully ill.

He had passed a terrible night. His bed had heaved like the ocean, with oceanic results. He had forgotten to put out his candle, but fortunately Ribot had blown it out for him, after putting him to bed and tucking him up like a real good Samaritan.

And next morning, when Madame Paul brought him a cup of *tisane de chiendent* (which does not happen to mean a hair of the dog that bit him), she was kind, but very severe on the dangers and disgrace of intoxication, and talked to him like a mother.

'If it had not been for kind Monsieur Ribot' (she told him), 'the doorstep would have been his portion; and who could say he didn't deserve it? And then think of the danger of fire from a tipsy man all alone in a small bedroom with chintz curtains and a lighted candle!'

'Ribot was kind enough to blow out my candle,' said Little Billee, humbly.

'Ah, Dame!' said Madame Paul, with much meaning — 'au moins il a *bon coeur*, Monsieur Ribot!'

And the cruellest sting of all was when the goodnatured and incorrigibly festive Ribot came and sat by his bedside, and was kind and tenderly sympathetic, and got him a pick-me-up from the chemist's (unknown to Madame Paul).

'Credieu! vous vous êtes crânement bien amusé, hier soir! quelle bosse, hein! je parie que c'était plus drôle que chez ma tante Kolb!'

All of which, of course, is unnecessary to translate; except, perhaps, the word *bosse*, which stands for *noce*, which stands for a 'jolly good spree.'

In all his innocent little life Little Billee had never dreamed of such humiliation as this—such ignominious depths of shame and misery and remorse! He did not care to live. He had but one longing: that Trilby, dear Trilby, kind Trilby, would come and pillow his head on her beautiful white English bosom, and lay her soft, cool, tender hand on his aching brow, and there let him go to sleep, and sleeping, die!

He slept and slept, with no better rest for his aching brow than the pillow of his bed in the Hôtel Corneille, and failed to die this time. And when, after some forty-eight hours or so, he had quite

slept off the fumes of that memorable Christmas debauch, he found that a sad thing had happened to him, and a strange!

It was as though a tarnishing breath had swept over the reminiscent mirror of his mind and left a little film behind it, so that no past thing he wished to see therein was reflected with quite the old pristine clearness. As though the keen, quick, razor-like edge of his power to reach and re-evoke the bygone charm and glamour and essence of things had been blunted and coarsened. As though



“LES GLOUGLOUX DU VIN À QUAT’ SOUS....”

the bloom of that special joy, the gift he unconsciously had of recalling past emotions and sensations and situations, and making them actual once more by a mere effort of the will, had been brushed away.

And he never recovered the full use of that most precious faculty, the boon of youth and happy childhood, and which he had once possessed, without knowing it, in such singular and exceptional completeness. He was to lose other precious faculties of his over-rich and complex nature—to be pruned and clipped and thinned—that his one supreme faculty of painting might have elbow-room to reach its fullest, or else you could never have seen the wood for the trees (or *vice versa*—which is it?)

On New Year’s Day Taffy and the Laird were at their work in

the studio, when there was a knock at the door, and Monsieur Vinard, cap in hand, respectfully introduced a pair of visitors, an English lady and gentleman.

The gentleman was a clergyman, small, thin, roundshouldered, with a long neck; weak-eyed and dryly polite. The lady was middle-aged, though still young-looking; very pretty, with gray hair; very well dressed; very small, full of nervous energy, with tiny hands and feet. It was Little Billee's mother; and the clergyman, the Rev. Thomas Bagot, was her brother-in-law.

Their faces were full of trouble—so much so that the two painters did not even apologise for the carelessness of their attire, or for the odour of tobacco that filled the room. Little Billee's mother recognised the two painters at a glance, from the sketches and descriptions of which her son's letters were always full.

They all sat down.

After a moment's embarrassed silence, Mrs. Bagot exclaimed, addressing Taffy: 'Mr. Wynne, we are in terrible distress of mind. I don't know if my son has told you, but on Christmas day he engaged himself to be married!'

'To—be—married!' exclaimed Taffy and the Laird, for whom this was news indeed.

'Yes—to be married to a Miss Trilby O'Ferrall, who, from what he implies, is in quite a different position in life from himself. Do you know the lady, Mr. Wynne?'

'Oh yes! I know her very well indeed; we *all* know her.'

'Is she English?'

'She's an English subject, I believe.'

'Is she a Protestant or a Roman Catholic?'" inquired the clergyman.

'A—A—upon my word, I really don't know!'

'You know her very well indeed, and you *don't*—know—that, Mr. Wynne!' exclaimed Mr. Bagot.

'Is she a *lady*, Mr. Wynne?' asked Mrs. Bagot, somewhat impatiently, as if that were a much more important matter.

By this time the Laird had managed to basely desert his friend; had got himself into his bedroom, and from thence, by another door, into the street and away.

'A lady?' said Taffy, 'a—it so much depends upon what that word exactly means, you know; things are so—a—so different here. Her father was a gentleman, I believe—a Fellow of Trinity, Cambridge—and a clergyman, if *that* means anything!... he was unfortunate and all that—a—intemperate, I fear, and not successful in life. He has been dead six or seven years.'

'And her mother?'

'I really know very little about her mother, except that she was very handsome, I believe, and of inferior social rank to her husband. She's also dead; she died soon after him.'

'What is the young lady, then? An English governess, or something of that sort?'

'O no, no—a—nothing of *that* sort,' said Taffy (and inwardly, 'You coward—you cad of a Scotch thief of a sneak of a Laird—to leave all this to me!')

'What? Has she independent means of her own, then?'

'A—not that I know of; I should even say, decidedly not!'

'What is she, then? She's at least respectable, I hope?'

'At present she's a—a *blanchisseuse de fin*—that is considered respectable here.'

'Why, that's a washerwoman, isn't it?'

'Well—rather better than that, perhaps—*de fin*, you know!—things are so different in Paris! I don't think you'd say she was very much like a washerwoman—to look at!'

'Is she so good-looking, then?'

'Oh yes; extremely so. You may well say that—very beautiful, indeed—about that, at least, there is no doubt whatever!'

'And of unblemished character?'

Taffy, red and perspiring as if he were going through his Indian-club exercise, was silent—and his face expressed a miserable perplexity. But nothing could equal the anxious misery of those two maternal eyes, so wistfully fixed on his.

After some seconds of a most painful stillness, the lady said, 'Can't you—oh, *can't* you give me an answer, Mr. Wynne?'

'Oh, Mrs. Bagot, you have placed me in a terrible position! I—I love your son just as if he were my own brother! This engagement is a complete surprise to me—a most painful surprise! I'd thought of many possible things, but never of *that*! I cannot—I really *must* not conceal from you that it would be an unfortunate marriage for your son—from a—a wordly point of view, you know—although both I and M'Allister have a very deep and warm regard for poor Trilby O'Ferrall—indeed, a great admiration and affection and respect. She was once a model.'

'A *model*, Mr. Wynne? What *sort* of a model—there are models and models, of course.'

'Well, a model of every sort, in every possible sense of the word—head, hands, feet, everything!'

'A model for the *figure*?'

'Well—yes!'

'Oh, my God! my God! my God!' cried Mrs. Bagot—and she got up and walked up and down the studio in a most terrible state of agitation, her brother-in-law following her and begging her to control herself. Her exclamations seemed to shock him, and she didn't seem to care.

'Oh! Mr. Wynne! Mr. Wynne! If you only *knew* what my son is to me—to all of us—always has been! He has been with us all his life, till he came to this wicked, accursed city! My poor husband would never hear of his going to any school, for fear of all the harm he might learn there. My son was as innocent and pure-minded as any girl, Mr. Wynne—I could have trusted him anywhere—and

that's why I gave way and allowed him to come *here*, of all places in the world—all alone. Oh! I should have come with him! Fool—fool—fool that I was!....'

'Oh, Mr. Wynne, he won't see either his mother or his uncle! I found a letter from him at the hotel, saying he'd left Paris—and I don't even know where he's gone!.... Can't *you*, can't Mr. M'Allister do *anything* to avert this miserable disaster? You don't know how he loves you both—you should see his letters to me and to his sister! they are always full of you!'

'Indeed, Mrs. Bagot—you can count on M'Allister and me for doing everything in our power! But it is of no use our trying to influence your son—I feel quite sure of *that*! It is to *her* we must make our appeal.'

'Oh, Mr. Wynne! to a washerwoman—a figure model—and Heaven knows what besides! and with such a chance as this!'

'Mrs. Bagot, you don't know her! She may have been all that. But strange as it may seem to you—and seems to me, for that matter—she's a—she's—upon my word of honour, I really think she's about the best woman I ever met—the most unselfish—the most—'

'Ah! She's a *beautiful* woman—I can well see *that*!'

'She has a beautiful nature, Mrs. Bagot—you may believe me or not as you like—and it is to that I shall make my appeal, as your son's friend, who has his interest at heart. And let me tell you that deeply as I grieve for you in your present distress, my grief and concern for her are far greater!'

'What! grief for her if she marries my son!'

'No, indeed—but if she refuses to marry him. She may not do so, of course—but my instinct tells me she will!'

'Oh! Mr. Wynne, is that likely?'

'I will do my best to make it so—with such an utter trust in her unselfish goodness of heart and her passionate affection for your son as—'

'How do you know she has all this passionate affection for him?'

'Oh, M'Allister and I have long guessed it—though we never thought this particular thing would come of it. I think, perhaps, that first of all you ought to see her yourself—you would get quite a new idea of what she really is—you would be surprised, I assure you.'

Mrs. Bagot shrugged her shoulders impatiently, and there was silence for a minute or two.

And then, just as in a play, Trilby's 'Milk below!' was sounded at the door, and Trilby came into the little antechamber, and seeing strangers, was about to turn back. She was dressed as a grisette, in her Sunday gown and pretty white cap (for it was New Year's Day), and looking her very best.

Taffy called out, 'Come in, Trilby!'

And Trilby came into the studio.

As soon as she saw Mrs. Bagot's face she stopped short—erect, her shoulders a little high, her mouth a little open, her eyes wide

with fright—and pale to the lips—a pathetic, yet commanding, magnificent, and most distinguished apparition, in spite of her humble attire.

The little lady got up and walked straight to her, and looked up into her face, that seemed to tower so. Trilby breathed hard.

At length Mrs. Bagot said, in her high accents, 'You are Miss Trilby O'Ferrall?'

—'Oh yes—yes—I am Trilby O'Ferrall, and you are Mrs. Bagot; I can see that!'

A new tone had come into her large, deep, soft voice, so tragic, so touching, so strangely in accord with her whole aspect just then—so strangely in accord with the whole situation—that Taffy felt his cheeks and lips turn cold, and his big spine thrill and tickle all down his back.

'Oh yes; you are very, very beautiful—there's no doubt about that! You wish to marry my son?'

'I've refused to marry him nineteen times—for his own sake; he will tell you so himself. I am not the right person for him to marry. I know that. On Christmas night he asked me for the twentieth time; he swore he would leave Paris next day for ever if I refused him. I hadn't the courage. I was weak, you see! It was a dreadful mistake.'

'Are you so fond of him?'

'Fond of him? Aren't you?'

'I'm his mother, my good girl!'

To this Trilby seemed to have nothing to say.

'You have just said yourself you are not a fit wife for him. If you are so *fond* of him, will you ruin him by marrying him; drag him down; prevent him from getting on in life; separate him from his sister, his family, his friends?'

Trilby turned her miserable eyes to Taffy's miserable face, and said, 'Will it really be all that, Taffy?'

'Oh, Trilby, things have got all wrong, and can't be righted! I'm afraid it might be so. Dear Trilby—I can't tell you what I feel—but I can't tell you lies, you know!'

'Oh no—Taffy—you don't tell lies!'

Then Trilby began to tremble very much, and Taffy tried to make her sit down, but she wouldn't. Mrs. Bagot looked up into her face, herself breathless with keen suspense and cruel anxiety—almost imploring.

Trilby looked down at Mrs. Bagot very kindly, put out her shaking hand, and said: 'Good-bye, Mrs. Bagot. I will not marry your son. I *promise* you. I will never see him again.'

Mrs. Bagot caught and clasped her hand and tried to kiss it, and said: 'Don't go yet, my dear good girl. I want to talk to you. I want to tell you how deeply I—'

'Good-bye, Mrs. Bagot,' said Trilby, once more; and disengaging her hand, she walked swiftly out of the room.

Mrs. Bagot seemed stupefied, and only half content with her quick triumph.

'She will not marry your son, Mr. Bagot. I only wish to God she'd marry *me*!'

'Oh, Mr. Wynne!' said Mrs. Bagot, and burst into tears.

'Ah!' exclaimed the clergyman, with a feebly satirical smile and a little cough and sniff that were not sympathetic, 'now if *that* could be arranged—and I've no doubt there wouldn't be much opposition on the part of the lady' (here he made a little complimentary bow), 'it would be a very desirable thing all round!'

'It's tremendously good of you, I'm sure—to interest yourself in *my* humble affairs,' said Taffy. 'Look here, sir—I'm not a great genius like your nephew—and it doesn't much matter to any one



"'FOND OF HIM? AREN'T YOU?'"

but myself what I make of my life—but I can assure you that if Trilby's heart were set on me as it is on him, I would gladly cast in my lot with hers for life. She's one in a thousand. She's the one sinner that repenteth, you know?"

'Ah, yes—to be sure!—to be sure! I know all about that; still, facts are facts, and the world is the world, and we've got to live in it,' said Mr. Bagot, whose satirical smile had died away under the gleam of Taffy's choleric blue eye.

Then said the good Taffy, frowning down on the parson (who looked mean and foolish, as people can sometimes do even with right on their side): 'And now, Mr. Bagot—I can't tell you how very keenly I have suffered during this—a—this most painful inter-

view—on account of my very deep regard for Trilby O'Ferrall. I congratulate you and your sister-in-law on its complete success. I also feel very deeply for your nephew. I'm not sure that he has not lost more than he will gain by—a—by the—a—the success of this—a—this interview, in short!

Taffy's eloquence was exhausted, and his quick temper was getting the better of him.

Then Mrs. Bagot, drying her eyes, came and took his hand in a very charming and simple manner, and said: 'Mr. Wynne, I think I know what you are feeling just now. You must try and make some allowance for us. You will, I am sure, when we are gone, and you have had time to think a little. As for that noble and beautiful girl, I only wish that she were such that my son *could* marry her—in her past life, I mean. It is not her humble rank that would frighten me; *pray* believe that I am quite sincere in this—and don't think too hardly of your friend's mother. Think of all I shall have to go through with my poor son—who is deeply in love—and no wonder! and who has won the love of such a woman as that! and who cannot see at present how fatal to him such a marriage would be. I can see all the charm and believe in all the goodness, in spite of all. And, oh, how beautiful she is, and what a voice! All that counts for so much, doesn't it? I cannot tell you how I grieve for her. I can make no amends—who could, for such a thing? There are no amends, and I shall not even try. I will only write and tell her all I think and feel. You will forgive us, won't you?'

And in the quick, impulsive warmth and grace and sincerity of her manner as she said all this, Mrs. Bagot was so absurdly like Little Billee that it touched big Taffy's heart, and he would have forgiven anything, and there was nothing to forgive.

'Oh, Mrs. Bagot, there's no question of forgiveness. Good heavens! it is all so unfortunate, you know! Nobody's to blame, that I can see. Good-bye, Mrs. Bagot; good-bye, sir', and so saying, he saw them down to their *remise*, in which sat a singularly pretty young lady of seventeen or so, pale and anxious, and so like Little Billee that it was quite funny, and touched big Taffy's heart again.

When Trilby went out into the courtyard in the Place St. Anatole des Arts, she saw Miss Bagot looking out of the carriage window, and in the young lady's face, as she caught her eye, an expression of sweet surprise and sympathetic admiration, with lifted eyebrows and parted lips—just such a look as she had often got from Little Billee! She knew her for his sister at once. It was a sharp pang.

She turned away, saying to herself: 'Oh no; I will not separate him from his sister, his family, his friends! That would *never* do! *That's* settled, anyhow!'

Feeling a little dazed, and wishing to think, she turned up the Rue Vieille des Mauvais Ladres, which was always deserted at this hour. It was empty, but for a solitary figure sitting on a post, with

its legs dangling, its hands in its trousers-pockets, an inverted pipe in its mouth, a tattered straw hat on the back of its head, and a long gray coat down to its heels. It was the Laird.

As soon as he saw her he jumped off his post and came to her, saying: 'Oh, Trilby—what's it all about? I couldn't stand it! I ran away! Little Billee's mother's there!'

'Yes, Sandy dear. I've just seen her.'

'Well, what's up?'

'I've promised her never to see Little Billee any more. I was foolish enough to promise to marry him. I refused many times these last three months, and then he said he'd leave Paris and never come back, and so, like a fool, I gave way. I've offered to live with him and take care of him and be his servant—to be everything he wished but his wife! But he wouldn't hear of it. Dear, dear Little Billee! he's an angel—and I'll take precious good care no harm shall ever come to him through me! I shall leave this hateful place and go and live in the country: I suppose I must manage to get through life somehow, . . . Days are so long—aren't they! and there's *such* a lot of 'em! I know of some poor people who were once very fond of me, and I could live with them and help them and keep myself. The difficulty is about Jeannot. I thought it all out before it came to this. I was well prepared, you see.'

She smiled in a forlorn sort of way, with her upper lip drawn tight against her teeth, as if some one were pulling her back by the lobes of her ears.

'Oh! but, Trilby—what shall we do without you? Taffy and I, you know! You've become one of us!'

'Now, how good and kind of you to say that!' exclaimed poor Trilby, her eyes filling. 'Why, that's just all I lived for, till all this happened. But it can't be any more now, can it? Everything is changed for me—the very sky seems different. Ah! Durien's little song—"*Plaisir d'amour—chagrin d'amour!*" it's all quite true, isn't it? I shall start immediately, and take Jeannot with me, I think.'

'But where do you think of going?'

'Ah! I mayn't tell you that, Sandy dear—not for a long time! Think of all the trouble there'd be. Well, there's no time to be lost. I must take the bull by the horns.'

She tried to laugh, and took him by his big side whiskers and kissed him on the eyes and mouth, and her tears fell on his face.

Then, feeling unable to speak, she nodded farewell, and walked quickly up the narrow winding street. When she came to the first bend she turned round and waved her hand, and kissed it two or three times, and then disappeared.

The Laird stared for several minutes up the empty thoroughfare—wretched, full of sorrow and compassion. Then he filled himself another pipe and lit it, and hitched himself on to another post, and sat there dangling his legs and kicking his heels, and waited for the Bagots' cab to depart, that he might go up and face the righteous

wrath of Taffy like a man, and bear up against his bitter reproaches for cowardice and desertion before the foe.

Next morning Taffy received two letters: one, a very long one, was from Mrs. Bagot. He read it twice over, and was forced to acknowledge that it was a very good letter—the letter of a clever,



“I MUST TAKE THE BULL BY THE HORNS”

warm-hearted woman, but a woman also whose son was to her as the very apple of her eye. One felt she was ready to flay her dearest friend alive in order to make Little Billee a pair of gloves out of the skin, if he wanted a pair; but one also felt she would be genuinely sorry for the friend. Taffy's own mother had been a little like that, and he missed her every day of his life.

Full justice was done by Mrs. Bagot to all Trilby's qualities of

head and heart and person; but at the same time she pointed out, with all the cunning and ingeniously casuistic logic of her sex, when it takes to special pleading (even when it has right on its side) what the consequences of such a marriage must inevitably be in a few years—even sooner! The quick disenchantment, the lifelong regret, on both sides!

He could not have found a word to controvert her arguments, save perhaps in his own private belief that Trilby and Little Billee were both exceptional people; and how could he hope to know Little Billee's nature better than the boy's own mother!

And if he had been the boy's elder brother in blood, as he already was in heart and affection, would he, should he, could he have, given his fraternal sanction to such a match?

Both as his friend and his brother he felt it was out of the question.

The other letter was from Trilby, in her bold, careless handwriting, that sprawled all over the page, and her occasionally imperfect spelling. It ran thus:—

'MY DEAR, DEAR TAFFY—This is to say good-bye. I'm going away, to put an end to all this misery, for which nobody's to blame but myself.

'The very moment after I'd said yes to Little Billee I knew perfectly well what a stupid fool I was, and I've been ashamed of myself ever since. I had a miserable week, I can tell you. I knew how it would all turn out.

'I am dreadfully unhappy, but not half so unhappy as if I married him and he were ever to regret it and be ashamed of me; and of course he would, really, even if he didn't show it—good and kind as he is—an angel!

'Besides—of course I could never be a lady—how could I?—though I ought to have been one, I suppose. But everything seems to have gone wrong with me, though I never found it out before—and it can't be righted!

'Poor papa!

'I am going away with Jeannot. I've been neglecting him shamefully. I mean to make up for it all now.

'You mustn't try and find out where I am going; I know you won't if I beg you, nor any one else. It would make everything so much harder for me.

'Angèle knows; she has promised me not to tell. I should like to have a line from you very much. If you send it to her she will send it on to me.

'Dear Taffy, next to Little Billee, I love you and the Laird better than any one else in the whole world. I've never known real happiness till I met you. You have changed me into another person—you and Sandy and Little Billee.

'Oh, it *has* been a jolly time, though it didn't last long. It will have to do for me for life. So good-bye. I shall never, never forget; and remain, with dearest love, your ever faithful and most affectionate friend,

Trilby O'Ferrall.

'P.S.—When it has all blown over and settled again, if it ever does, I shall come back to Paris, perhaps, and see you again some day.'

The good Taffy pondered deeply over this letter—read it half a dozen times at least; and then he kissed it, and put it back into its envelope and locked it up.

He knew what very deep anguish underlay this somewhat trivial expression of her sorrow.

He guessed how Trilby, so childishly impulsive and demonstrative in the ordinary intercourse of friendship, would be more reticent than most women in such a case as this.

He wrote to her warmly, affectionately, at great length, and sent the letter as she had told him.

The Laird also wrote a long letter full of tenderly-worded friendship and sincere regard. Both expressed their hope and belief that they would soon see her again, when the first bitterness of her grief would be over, and that the old pleasant relations would be renewed.

And then, feeling wretched, they went and silently lunched together at the Café de l'Odéon, where the omelets were good and the wine wasn't blue.

Late that evening they sat together in the studio, reading. They found they could not talk to each other very readily without Little Billee to listen—three's company sometimes and two's none!

Suddenly there was a tremendous getting up the dark stairs outside in a violent hurry, and Little Billee burst into the room like a small whirlwind—haggard, out of breath, almost speechless at first with excitement.

'Trilby! where is she?... what's become of her?... She's run away.... oh! She's written me such a letter!.... We were to have been married.... at the Embassy.... my mother.... she's been meddling; and that cursed old ass.... that beast.... my uncle!.... They've been here! I know all about it.... Why didn't you stick up for her?....'

'I did.... as well as I could. Sandy couldn't stand it, and cut.'

'You stuck up for her.... *you*—why, you agreed with my mother that she oughtn't to marry me—you—you false friend—you!.... Why, she's an angel—far too good for the likes of *me*.... you know she is. As.... as for her social position and all that, what degrading rot! Her father was as much a gentleman as mine.... besides.... what the devil do I care for her father?... it's *her* I want—*her*—*her*—*her*, I tell you.... I can't live without her.... I must have her back—I must have her back.... do you *hear*? We were to have lived together at Barbizon.... all our lives—and I was to have painted stunning pictures.... like those other fellows there. Who cares for *their* social position, I should like to know.... or that of their wives? *Damn* social position!.... we've often said so—over and over again. An artist's life should be *away* from the world—above all that meanness and paltriness.... all in his work. Social

position, indeed! Over and over again we've said what fetid, bestial rot it all was—a thing to make one sick and shut one's self away from the world.... Why say one thing and act another?.... Love comes before all—love levels all—love and art.... and beauty—before such beauty as Trilby's rank doesn't exist. Such rank as mine, too! Good God! I'll never paint another stroke till I've got her back.... never, never, never, I tell you—I can't—I won't!....'

And so the poor boy went on, tearing and raving about in his rampage, knocking over chairs and easels, stammering and shrieking, mad with excitement.

They tried to reason with him, to make him listen, to point out



“TRILBY! WHERE IS SHE?”

that it was not her social position alone that unfitted her to be his wife and the mother of his children, etc.

It was no good. He grew more and more uncontrollable, became almost unintelligible, he stammered so—a pitiable sight and pitiable to hear.

‘Oh! oh! good heavens! are you so precious immaculate, you two, that you should throw stones at poor Trilby! What a shame, what a hideous shame it is that there should be one law for the woman and another for the man!.... poor weak women—poor, soft, affectionate things that beasts of men are always running after, and pestering, and ruining, and trampling under foot.... Oh! oh! it makes me sick—it makes me sick!’ And finally he gasped and screamed and fell down in a fit on the floor.

The doctor was sent for; Taffy went in a cab to the Hôtel de Lille et d'Albion to fetch his mother; and poor Little Billee, quite unconscious, was undressed by Sandy and Madame Vinard and put into the Laird's bed.

The doctor came, and not long after Mrs. Bagot and her daughter. It was a serious case. Another doctor was called in. Beds were got and made up in the studio for the two grief-stricken ladies, and thus closed the eve of what was to have been poor Little Billee's wedding-day, it seems.

Little Billee's attack appears to have been a kind of epileptic seizure. It ended in brain fever and other complications—a long and tedious illness. It was many weeks before he was out of danger, and his convalescence was long and tedious too.

His nature seemed changed. He lay languid and listless—never even mentioned Trilby, except once to ask if she had come back, and if any one knew where she was, and if she had been written to.

She had not, it appears. Mrs. Bagot had thought it was better not, and Taffy and the Laird agreed with her that no good could come of writing.

Mrs. Bagot felt bitterly against the woman who had been the cause of all his trouble, and bitterly against herself for her injustice. It was an unhappy time for everybody.

There was more unhappiness still to come.

One day in February Madame Angèle Boisse called on Taffy and the Laird in the temporary studio where they worked. She was in terrible tribulation.

Trilby's little brother had died of scarlet fever and was buried, and Trilby had left her hiding-place the day after the funeral and had never come back, and this was a week ago. She and Jeannot had been living at a village called Vibraye, in La Sarthe, lodging with some poor people she knew—she washing and working with her needle till her brother fell ill.

She had never left his bedside for a moment, night or day, and when he died her grief was so terrible that people thought she would go out of her mind; and the day after he was buried she was not to be found anywhere—she had disappeared, taking nothing with her, not even her clothes—simply vanished and left no sign, no message of any kind.

All the ponds had been searched—all the wells, and the small stream that flows through Vibraye—and the old forest.

Taffy went to Vibraye, cross-examined everybody he could, communicated with the Paris police, but with no result; and every afternoon, with a beating heart, he went to the Morgue....

The news was of course kept from Little Billee. There was no difficulty about this. He never asked a question, hardly ever spoke.

When he first got up and was carried into the studio, he asked

for his picture 'The Pitcher Goes to the Well,' and looked at it for a while, and then shrugged his shoulders and laughed—a miserable sort of laugh, painful to hear and see—the laugh of a cold old man, who laughs so as not to cry! Then he looked at his mother and sister, and saw the sad havoc that grief and anxiety had wrought in them.

It seemed to him, as in a bad dream, that he had been mad for many years—a cause of endless sickening terror and distress; and that his poor weak wandering wits had come back at last, bringing in their train cruel remorse, and the remembrance of all the patient



'HE FELL A-WEEPING, QUITE DESPERATELY'

love and kindness that had been lavished on him; for many, many years! His sweet sister—his dear, long-suffering mother! what had really happened to make them look like this?

And taking them both in his feeble arms, he fell a-weeping, quite desperately and for a long time.

And when his weeping-fit was over, when he had quite wept himself out, he fell asleep.

And when he awoke he was conscious that another sad thing had happened to him, and that for some mysterious cause his power of loving had not come back with his wandering wits—had been left behind—and it seemed to him that it was gone for ever and ever—would never come back again—not even his love for his mother and sister, not even his love for Trilby—where all *that* had once been was a void, a gap, a blankness....

Truly, if Trilby had suffered much, she had also been the innocent cause of terrible suffering. Poor Mrs. Bagot, in her heart, could not forgive her.

I feel this is getting to be quite a sad story, and that it is high time to cut this part of it short.

As the warmer weather came, and Little Billee got stronger, the studio became more lively. The ladies' beds were removed to another studio on the next landing, which was vacant, and the friends came to see Little Billee, and make life more easy for him and his mother and sister.

As for Taffy and the Laird, they had already long been to Mrs. Bagot as a pair of crutches, without whose invaluable help she could never have held herself upright to pick her way in all this maze of trouble.

Then M. Carrel came every day to chat with his favourite pupil and gladden Mrs. Bagot's heart. And also Durien, Carnegie, Petrol-icoonose, Vincent, Antony, Lorrimer, Dodor, and l'Zouzou; Mrs. Bagot thought the last two irresistible, when she had once been satisfied that they were 'gentlemen,' in spite of appearances. And, indeed, they showed themselves to great advantage; and though they were so much the opposite to Little Billee in everything, she felt almost maternal towards them, and gave them innocent, good, motherly advice, which they swallowed *avec attendrissement*, not even stealing a look at each other. And they held Mrs. Bagot's wool, and listened to Miss Bagot's sacred music with upturned pious eyes, and mealy mouths that butter wouldn't melt in!

It is good to be a soldier and a detrimental; you touch the hearts of women and charm them—old and young, high or low (excepting, perhaps, a few worldly mothers of marriageable daughters). They take the sticking of your tongue in the cheek for the wearing of your heart on the sleeve.

Indeed, good women all over the world, and ever since it began, have loved to be bamboozled by these genial, roistering dare-devils, who haven't got a penny to bless themselves with (which is so touching), and are supposed to carry their lives in their hands, even in piping times of peace. Nay, even a few rare *bad* women sometimes; such women as the best and wisest of us are often ready to sell our souls for!

'A lightsome eye, a soldier's mien,
A feather of the blue,
A doublet of the Lincoln green—
No more of me you knew,
My love!
No more of me you knew. . . .'

As if that wasn't enough, and to spare!

Little Billee could hardly realise that these two polite and gentle and sympathetic sons of Mars were the lively grigs who had made themselves so pleasant all round, and in such a singular manner, on

the top of that St. Cloud omnibus; and he admired how they added hypocrisy to their other crimes!

Svengali had gone back to Germany, it seemed, with his pockets full of napoleons and big Havana cigars, and wrapped in an immense fur-lined coat, which he meant to wear all through the summer. But little Gecko often came with his violin and made lovely music, and that seemed to do Little Billee more good than anything else.

It made him realise in his brain all the love he could no longer feel in his heart. The sweet melodic phrase, rendered by a master, was as wholesome, refreshing balm to him while it lasted—as manna in the wilderness. It was the one good thing within his reach, never to be taken from him as long as his ear-drums remained and he could hear a master play.

Poor Gecko treated the two English ladies *de bas en haut* as if they had been goddesses, even when they accompanied him on the piano! He begged their pardon for every wrong note they struck, and adopted their 'tempi'—that is the proper technical term, I believe—and turned scherzos and allegrettos into funeral dirges to please them; and agreed with them, poor little traitor, that it all sounded much better like that!

O Beethoven! O Mozart! did you turn in your graves?

Then, on fine afternoons, Little Billee was taken for drives to the Bois de Boulogne with his mother and sister in an open fly, and generally Taffy as a fourth; to Passy, Auteuil, Boulogne, St. Cloud, Meudon—there are many charming places within an easy drive of Paris.

And sometimes Taffy or the Laird would escort Mrs. and Miss Bagot to the Luxembourg Gallery, the Louvre, the Palais Royal; to the Comédie Française once or twice; and on Sunday, now and then, to the English chapel in the Rue Marbœuf. It was all very pleasant; and Miss Bagot looks back on the days of her brother's convalescence as among the happiest in her life.

And they would all five dine together in the studio, with Madame Vinard to wait, and her mother (a cordon bleu) for cook; and the whole aspect of the place was changed and made fragrant, sweet, and charming by all this new feminine invasion and occupation.

And what is sweeter to watch than the dawn and growth of love's young dream, when strength and beauty meet together by the couch of a beloved invalid?

Of course the sympathetic reader will foresee how readily the stalwart Taffy fell a victim to the charms of his friend's sweet sister, and how she grew to return his more than brotherly regard! and how, one lovely evening, just as March was going out like a lamb (to make room for the first of April), Little Billee joined their hands together, and gave them his brotherly blessing!

As a matter of fact, however, nothing of this kind happened. Nothing ever happens but the *unforeseen*. Pазienza!

Then at length one day—it was a fine, sunny, showery day in

April, by the bye, and the big studio window was open at the top and let in a pleasant breeze from the north-west, just as when our little story began—a railway omnibus drew up at the porte cochère in the Place St. Anatole des Arts, and carried away to the station of the Chemin de Fer du Nord Little Billee and his mother and sister, and all their belongings (the famous picture had gone before); and Taffy and the Laird rode with them, their faces very long, to see the last of the dear people, and of the train that was to bear them away from Paris; and Little Billee, with his quick, prehensile, æsthetic eye, took many a long and wistful parting gaze at many a French thing he loved, from the gray towers of Notre Dame downward—Heaven only knew when he might see them again!—so he tried to get their aspect well by heart, that he might have the better store of beloved shape and colour memories to chew the cud of when his lost powers of loving and remembering clearly should come back, and he lay awake at night and listened to the wash of the Atlantic along the beautiful red sandstone coast at home.

He had a faint hope that he should feel sorry at parting with Taffy and the Laird.

But when the time came for saying good-bye he couldn't feel sorry in the least, for all he tried and strained so hard!

So he thanked them so earnestly and profusely for all their kindness and patience and sympathy (as did also his mother and sister) that their hearts were too full to speak, and their manner was quite gruff—it was a way they had when they were deeply moved and didn't want to show it.

And as he gazed out of the carriage window at their two forlorn figures looking after him when the train steamed out of the station, his sorrow at not feeling sorry made him look so haggard and so woe-begone that they could scarcely bear the sight of him departing without them, and almost felt as if they must follow by the next train, and go and cheer him up in Devonshire, and themselves too.

They did not yield to this amiable weakness. Sorrowfully, arm-in-arm, with trailing umbrellas, they recrossed the river, and found their way to the Café de l'Odéon, where they ate many omelets in silence, and dejectedly drank of the best they could get, and were very sad indeed.

.

Nearly five years have elapsed since we bade farewell and *au revoir* to Taffy and the Laird at the Paris station of the Chemin de Fer du Nord, and wished Little Billee and his mother and sister Godspeed on their way to Devonshire, where the poor sufferer was to rest and lie fallow for a few months, and recruit his lost strength and energy, that he might follow up his first and well-deserved success, which perhaps contributed just a little to his recovery.

Many of my readers will remember his splendid *début* at the Royal Academy in Trafalgar Square with that now so famous canvas

'The Pitcher Goes to the Well,' and how it was sold three times over on the morning of the private view, the third time for a thousand pounds—just five times what he got for it himself. And that was thought a large sum in those days for a beginner's picture two feet by four.

I am well aware that such a vulgar test is no criterion whatever of a picture's real merit. But this picture is well known to all the



"SORROWFULLY, ARM IN ARM"

world by this time, and sold only last year at Christie's (more than thirty-six years after it was painted) for three thousand pounds.

Thirty-six years! That goes a long way to redeem even three thousand pounds of all their cumulative vulgarity.

'The Pitcher' is now in the National Gallery, with that other canvas by the same hand, 'The Moon-Dial.' There they hang together for all who care to see them, his first and his last—the blossom and the fruit.

He had not long to live himself, and it was his good fortune, so

rare among those whose work is probably destined to live for ever, that he succeeded at his first go off.

And his success was of the best and most flattering kind.

It began high up, where it should, among the masters of his own craft. But his fame filtered quickly down to those immediately beneath, and through these to wider circles. And there was quite enough of opposition and vilification and coarse abuse of him to clear it of any suspicion of cheapness or evanescence. What better antiseptic can there be than the philistine's deep hate: what sweeter, fresher, wholesomer music than the sound of his voice when he doth so furiously rage?

Yes! That is 'good production'—as Svengali would have said—'C'est un cri du cœur.'

And then, when popular acclaim brings the great dealers and the big cheques, up rises the printed howl of the duffer, the disappointed one, the 'wounded thing with an angry cry'—the prosperous and happy bagman that *should* have been, who has given up all for art, and finds he can't paint and make himself a name, after all, and never will, so falls to writing about those who can—and what writing!

To write in hissing dispraise of our more successful fellow-craftsman, and of those who admire him—that is not a clean or pretty trade. It seems, alas! an easy one, and it gives pleasure to so many. It does not even want good grammar. But it pays—well enough even to start and run a magazine with, instead of scholarship, and taste, and talent! humour, sense, wit, and wisdom! It is something like the purveying of pornographic pictures: some of us look at them and laugh, and even buy. To be a purchaser is bad enough; but to be the purveyor thereof—ugh!

A poor devil of a cracked soprano (are there such people still?) who has been turned out of the Pope's choir because he can't sing in tune, *after all*!—think of him yelling and squeaking his treble rage at Santley—Sims Reeves—Lablache!

Poor, lost, beardless nondescript! why not fly to other climes, where at least thou might'st hide from us thy woful crack, and keep thy miserable secret to thyself! Are there no harems still left in Stamboul for the likes of thee to sweep and clean, no women's beds to make and slops to empty, and doors and windows to bar—and tales to carry, and the pasha's confidence and favour and protection to win? Even *that* is a better trade than pandering for hire to the basest instinct of all—the dirty pleasure we feel (some of us) in seeing mud and dead cats and rotten eggs flung at those we cannot but admire—and secretly envy!

All of which eloquence means that Little Billee was pitched into right and left, as well as overpraised. And it all rolled off him like water off a duck's back, both praise and blame.

It was a happy summer for Mrs. Bagot, a sweet compensation for all the anguish of the winter that had gone before, with her two

beloved children together under her wing, and all the world (for her) ringing with the praise of her boy, the apple of her eye, so providentially rescued from the very jaws of death, and from other dangers almost as terrible to her fiercely-jealous maternal heart.

And his affection for her *seemed* to grow with his returning health; but, alas! he was never again to be quite the same light-hearted, innocent, expansive lad he had been before that fatal year spent in Paris.

One chapter of his life was closed, never to be reopened, never to be spoken of again by him to her, by her to him. She could neither forgive nor forget. She could but be silent.

Otherwise he was pleasant and sweet to live with, and everything was done to make his life at home as sweet and pleasant as a loving mother could—as could a most charming sister—and others' sisters who were charming too, and much disposed to worship at the shrine of this young celebrity, who woke up one morning in their little village to find himself famous, and bore his blushing honours so meekly. And among them the vicar's daughter, his sister's friend and co-teacher at the Sunday-school, 'a simple, pure, and pious maiden of gentle birth', everything he once thought a young lady should be; and her name it was Alice, and she was sweet, and her hair was brown—as brown!....

And if he no longer found the simple country pleasures, the junketings and pic-nics, the garden-parties and innocent little musical evenings, quite so exciting as of old, he never showed it.

Indeed, there was much that he did not show, and that his mother, and sister tried in vain to guess—many things.

And among them one thing that constantly preoccupied and distressed him—the numbness of his affections. He could be as easily demonstrative to his mother and sister as though nothing had ever happened to him—from the mere force of a sweet old habit—even more so, out of sheer gratitude and compunction.

But alas! he felt that in his heart he could no longer care for them in the least!—nor for Taffy, nor the Laird, nor for himself; not even for Trilby, of whom he constantly thought, but without emotion; and of whose strange disappearance he had been told, and the story had been confirmed in all its details by Angèle Boisse, to whom he had written.

It was as though some part of his brain where his affections were seated had been paralysed, while all the rest of it was as keen and as active as ever. He felt like some poor live bird or beast or reptile, a part of whose cerebrum (or cerebellum, or whatever it is) had been dug out by the vivisector for experimental purposes; and the strongest emotional feeling he seemed capable of was his anxiety and alarm about this curious symptom, and his concern as to whether he ought to mention it or not.

He did not do so, for fear of causing distress, hoping that it would pass away in time, and redoubled his caresses to his mother and

sister, and clung to them more than ever; and became more considerate of others in thought and manner, word, and deed than he had ever been before, as though by constantly assuming the virtue he had no longer he would gradually coax it back again. There was no trouble he would not take to give pleasure to the humblest.

Also, his vanity about himself had become as nothing, and he missed it almost as much as his affection.

Yet he told himself over and over again that he was a great artist, and that he would spare no pains to make himself a greater. But that was no merit of his own.

$2 + 2 = 4$, also $2 \times 2 = 4$: that peculiarity was no reason why 4 should be conceited; for what was 4 but a result, either way?

Well, he was like 4—just an inevitable result of circumstances over which he had no control—a mere product or sum; and though he meant to make himself as big a 4 as he could (to cultivate his peculiar *fourness*), he could no longer feel the old conceit and self-complacency; and they had been a joy, and it was hard to do without them.

At the bottom of it all was a vague, disquieting unhappiness, a constant fidget.

And it seemed to him, and much to his distress, that such mild unhappiness would be the greatest he could ever feel henceforward—but that, such as it was, it would never leave him, and that his moral existence would be for evermore one long gray gloomy blank—the glimmer of twilight—never glad, confident morning again!

So much for Little Billee's convalescence.

Then one day in the late autumn he spread his wings and flew away to London, which was very ready with open arms to welcome William Bagot, the already famous painter, *alias* Little Billee!

PART FIFTH

LITTLE BILLEE

An Interlude

Then the mortal coldness of the soul like death itself comes down;
It cannot feel for other's woes, it dare not dream its own;
That heavy chill has frozen o'er the fountain of our tears,
And, though the eye may sparkle yet, 'tis where the ice appears.

'Though wit may flash from fluent lips, and mirth distract the breast,
Through midnight hours that yield no more their former hope of rest:
'Tis but as ivy leaves around a ruined turret wreath,
All green and wildly fresh without, but worn and grey beneath.'

When Taffy and the Laird went back to the studio in the Place St. Anatole des Arts, and resumed their ordinary life there, it was with a sense of desolation and dull bereavement beyond anything they could have imagined; and this did not seem to lessen as the time wore on.

They realised for the first time how keen and penetrating and unintermittent had been the charm of those two central figures—Trilby and Little Billee—and how hard it was to live without them, after such intimacy as had been theirs.

'Oh, it *has* been a jolly time, though it didn't last long!' So Trilby had written in her farewell letter to Taffy; and these words were true for Taffy and the Laird as well as for her.

And that is the worst of those dear people who have charm: they are so terrible to do without, when once you have got accustomed to them and all their ways.

And when, besides being charming, they are simple, clever, affectionate, constant, and sincere, like Trilby and Little Billee! Then the lamentable hole their disappearance makes is not to be filled up! And when they are full of genius, like Little Billee—and like Trilby, funny without being vulgar. For so she always seemed to the Laird and Taffy, even in French (in spite of her Gallic audacities of thought, speech, and gesture).

All seemed to have suffered change. The very boxing and fencing were gone through perfunctorily, for mere health's sake; and a thin layer of adipose deposit began to soften the outlines of the hills and dales on Taffy's mighty forearm.

Dodor and l'Zouzou no longer came so often, now that the charming Little Billee and his charming mother and still more charming sister had gone away—nor Carnegie, nor Antony, nor Loirimer, nor Vincent, nor the Greek. Gecko never came at all. Even Svengali was missed, little as he had been liked. It is a dismal and sulky-looking piece of furniture, a grand piano that nobody ever plays—

with all its sound and its souvenirs locked up inside—a kind of mausoleum! a lop-sided coffin, trestles and all! So it went back to London by the ‘little quickness,’ just as it had come!

Thus Taffy and the Laird grew quite sad and mopy, and lunched at the Café de l’Odéon every day—till the goodness of the omelets palled, and the redness of the wine there got on their nerves and into their heads and faces, and made them sleepy till dinner-time. And then, waking up, they dressed respectably, and dined expensively ‘like gentlemen,’ in the Palais Royal, or the Passage Choiseul, or the Passage des Panoramas—for three francs, three francs fifty, even five francs a head, and half a franc to the waiter!—and went to the theatre almost every night, on that side of the water—and more often than not they took a cab home, each smoking a Panatellas, which costs twenty-five centimes—five sous—2½d.!

Then they feebly drifted into quite decent society—like Lorrimer and Carnegie—with dress-coats and white ties on, and their hair parted in the middle and down the back of the head, and brought over the ears in a bunch at each side, as was the English fashion in those days; and subscribed to *Galignani’s Messenger*; and had themselves proposed and seconded for the Cercle Anglais in the Rue Sainte-n’y Touche, a circle of British philistines of the very deepest dye; and went to hear divine service on Sunday mornings in Rue Marbœuf!

Indeed, by the end of the summer they had sunk into such depths of demoralisation that they felt they must really have a change; and decided on giving up the studio in the Place St. Anatole des Arts, and leaving Paris for good; and going to settle for the winter in Düsseldorf, which is a very pleasant place for English painters who do not wish to overwork themselves—as the Laird well knew, having spent a year there.

It ended in Taffy’s going to Antwerp for the Kermesse, to paint the Flemish drunkard of our time just as he really is; and the Laird’s going to Spain, so that he might study toreadors from the life.

I may as well state here that the Laird’s toreador pictures, which had had quite a vogue in Scotland as long as he had been content to paint them in the Place St. Anatole des Arts, quite ceased to please (or sell) after he had been to Seville and Madrid; so he took to painting Roman cardinals and Neapolitan pifferari from the depths of his consciousness—and was so successful that he made up his mind he would never spoil his market by going to Italy!

So he went and painted his cardinals and his pifferari in Algiers, and Taffy joined him there, and painted Algerian Jews—just as they really are (and didn’t sell them); and then they spent a year in Munich, and then a year in Düsseldorf, and a winter in Cairo, and so on.

And all this time, Taffy, who took everything *au grand sérieux*—especially the claims and obligations of friendship—corresponded regularly with Little Billee, who wrote him long and amusing letters

back again, and had plenty to say about his life in London which was a series of triumphs, artistic and social—and you would have thought from his letters, modest though they were, that no happier young man, or more elate, was to be found anywhere in the world.

It was a good time in England, just then, for young artists of promise; a time of evolution, revolution, change, and development—of the founding of new schools and the crumbling away of old ones—a keen struggle for existence—a surviving of the fit—a preparation, let us hope, for the ultimate survival of the fittest.

And among the many glories of this particular period two names stand out very conspicuously—for the immediate and (so far) lasting fame their bearers achieved, and the wide influence they exerted, and continue to exert still.

The world will not easily forget Frederic Walker and William Bagot, those two singularly gifted boys, whom it soon became the fashion to bracket together, to compare and to contrast, as one compares and contrasts Thackeray and Dickens, Carlyle and Macaulay, Tennyson and Browning—a futile though pleasant practice, of which the temptations seem irresistible!

Yet why compare the lily and the rose?

These two young masters had the genius and the luck to be the progenitors of much of the best art work that has been done in England during the last thirty years, in oils, in water colour, in black and white.

They were both essentially English and of their own time; both absolutely original, receiving their impressions straight from nature itself; uninfluenced by any school, ancient or modern, they founded schools instead of following any, and each was a law unto himself, and a law-giver unto many others. Both were equally great in whatever they attempted—landscape, figures, birds, beasts, or fishes. Who does not remember the fishmonger's shop, by F. Walker, or W. Bagot's little piebald piglings, and their venerable black mother, and their immense fat wallowing pink papa? An ineffable charm of poetry and refinement, of pathos and sympathy and delicate humour combined, an incomparable ease and grace and felicity of workmanship belong to each; and yet in their work are they not as wide apart as the poles; each complete in himself and yet a complement to the other?

And, oddly enough, they were both singularly alike in aspect—both small and slight, though beautifully made, with tiny hands and feet; always arrayed as the lilies of the field, for all they toiled and spun so arduously; both had regularly-featured faces of a noble cast and most winning character; both had the best and simplest manners in the world, and a way of getting themselves much and quickly and permanently liked....

Que la terre leur soit légère!

And who can say that the fame of one is greater than the other's! Their pinnacles are twin, I venture to believe—of just an equal

height and width and thickness, like their bodies in this life; but unlike their frail bodies in one respect: no taller pinnacles are to be seen, methinks, in all the garden of the deathless dead painters of our time, and none more built to last!

But it is not with the art of Little Billee, nor with his fame as a painter, that we are chiefly concerned in this unpretending little tale, except in so far as they have some bearing on his character and his fate.

'I should like to know the detailed history of the Englishman's first love, and how he lost his innocence!'

'Ask him!'

'Ask him yourself!'

Thus Papelard and Bouchardy, on the morning of Little Billee's first appearance at Carrel's studio, in the Rue des Potirons St. Michel.

And that is the question the present scribe is doing his little best to answer.

A good-looking, famous, well-bred, and well-dressed youth finds that London society opens its doors very readily; he hasn't long to knock; and it would be difficult to find a youth more fortunately situated, handsomer, more famous, better dressed or better bred, more seemingly happy and successful, with more attractive qualities and more condonable faults, than Little Billee, as Taffy and the Laird found him when they came to London after their four or five years in foreign parts—their Wanderjahr.

He had a fine studio and a handsome suite of rooms in Fitzroy Square. Beautiful specimens of his unfinished work, endless studies, hung on his studio walls. Everything else was as nice as it could be—the furniture, the bibelots, and bric-à-brac, the artistic foreign and Eastern knick-knacks and draperies and hangings and curtains and rugs—the semi-grand piano by Collard and Collard.

That immortal canvas, the 'Moon-Dial' (just begun, and already commissioned by Moses Lyon, the famous picture-dealer), lay on his easel.

No man worked harder and with teeth more clinched than Little Billee when he was at work—none rested or played more discreetly when it was time to rest or play.

The glass on his mantelpiece was full of cards of invitation, reminders, pretty mauve and pink and lilac scented notes; nor were coronets wanting on many of these hospitable little missives. He had quite overcome his fancied aversion for bloated dukes and lords and the rest (we all do sooner or later, if things go well with us); especially for their wives and sisters and daughters and female cousins; even their mothers and aunts. In point of fact, and in spite of his tender years, he was in some danger (for his art) of developing into that type so adored by sympathetic women who

haven't got much to do: the friend, the tame cat, the platonic lover (with many loves) —the squire of dames, the trusty one, of whom husbands and brothers have no fear!—the delicate, harmless dilettante of Eros—the dainty shepherd who dwells 'dans le pays du tendre!'—and stops there!

The woman flatters and the man confides—and there is no danger whatever, I'm told—and I'm glad!

One man loves his fiddle (or, alas! his neighbour's sometimes) for all the melodies he can wake from it—it is but a selfish love!

Another, who is no fiddler, may love a fiddle too; its neatness, its colour—its delicate grainings, the lovely lines and curves of its back and front—for its own sake, so to speak. He may have a whole galleryful of fiddles to love in this innocent way—a harem!—and yet not know a single note of music, or even care to hear one. He will dust them and stroke them, and take them down and try to put them in tune — *pizzicato*! — and put them back again, and call them ever such sweet little pet exotic names: viol, viola, viola d'amore, viol di gamba, violino mio! and breathe his little troubles into them, and they will give back inaudible little murmurs in sympathetic response, like a damp Æolian harp; but he will never draw a bow across the strings, nor wake a single chord—or discord!

And who shall say he is not wise in his generation? It is but an old-fashioned Philistine notion that fiddles were only made to be played on—the fiddles themselves are beginning to resent it; and rightly, I wot!

In this harmless fashion Little Billee was friends with more than one fine lady *de par le monde*.

Indeed, he had been reproached by his more bohemian brothers of the brush for being something of a tuft-hunter—most unjustly. But nothing gives such keen offence to our unsuccessful brother, bohemian or bourgeois, as our sudden intimacy with the so-called great, the little lords and ladies of this little world! Not even our fame and success, and all the joy and pride they bring us, are so hard to condone—so embittering, so humiliating, to the jealous fraternal heart.

Alas! poor humanity—that the mere countenance of our betters (if they *are* our betters!) should be thought so priceless a boon, so consummate an achievement, so crowning a glory, as all that!

'A dirty bit of orange-peel,
The stump of a cigar—
Once trod on by a princely heel,
How beautiful they are!'

Little Billee was no tuft-hunter—he was the tuft-hunted, or had been. No one of his kind was ever more persistently, resolutely, hospitably harried than this young 'hare with many friends' by people of rank and fashion.

And at first he thought them most charming; as they so often are, these graceful, gracious, gay, good-natured stoics and barbarians,

whose manners are as easy and simple as their morals—but how much better!—and who, at least, have this charm, that they can wallow in untold gold (when they happen to possess it) without ever seeming to stink of the same: yes, they bear wealth gracefully—and the want of it more gracefully still! and these are pretty accomplishments that have yet to be learned by our new aristocracy of the shop and countinghouse, Jew or Gentile, which is everywhere elbowing its irresistible way to the top and front of everything, both here and abroad.

Then he discovered that, much as you might be with them, you could never be *of* them, unless perchance you managed to hook on by marrying one of their ugly ducklings—their failures—their remnants! and even then life isn't all beer and skittles for a rank outsider, I'm told! Then he discovered that he didn't want to be *of* them in the least; especially at such a cost as that! and that to be very much *with* them was apt to pall, like everything else!

Also, he found that they were very mixed—good, bad, and indifferent; and not always very dainty or select in their predilections, since, they took unto their bosoms such queer outsiders (just for the sake of being amused a little while) that their capricious favour ceased to be an honour and a glory—if it ever was! And then, their fickleness!

Indeed, he found, or thought he found, that they could be just as clever, as liberal, as polite or refined—as narrow, insolent, swaggering, coarse, and vulgar—as handsome, as ugly—as graceful, as ungainly—as modest or conceited, as any other upper class of the community—and indeed some lower ones!

Beautiful young women, who had been taught how to paint pretty little landscapes (with an ivy-mantled ruin in the middle distance), talked technically of painting to him, *de pair à pair*, as though they were quite on the same artistic level, and didn't mind admitting it, in spite of the social gulf between.

Hideous old frumps (osseous or obese, yet with unduly bared necks and shoulders that made him sick) patronised him and gave him good advice, and told him to emulate Mr. Buckner both in his genius and his manners—since Mr. Buckner was the only 'gentleman' who ever painted for hire; and they promised him, in time, an equal success!

Here and there some sweet old darling specially enslaved him by her kindness, grace, knowledge of life, and tender womanly sympathy, like the dowager Lady Chiselhurst—or some sweet young one, like the lovely Duchess of Towers, by her beauty, wit, good-humour, and sisterly interest in all he did, and who in some vague, distant manner constantly reminded him of Trilby, although she was such a great and fashionable lady!

But just such darlings, old or young, were to be found, with still higher ideals, in less exalted spheres; and were easier of access, with no impassable gulf between—spheres where there was no

patronising, nothing but deference and warm appreciation and delicate flattery, from men and women alike—and where the aged Venuses, whose prime was of the days of Waterloo, went with their historical remains duly shrouded, like ivymantled ruins (and in the middle distance!).

So he actually grew tired of the great before they had time to tire of him—incredible as it may seem, and against nature; and this saved him many a heart-burning; and he ceased to be seen at fashionable drums or gatherings of any kind, except in one or two houses where he was especially liked and made welcome for his own sake; such as Lord Chisholm's in Piccadilly, where the 'Moon-Dial' found a home for a few years before going to its last home and final resting-place in the National Gallery (*R.I.P.*); or Baron Stoppenheim's in Cavendish Square, where many lovely little water-colours signed W. B. occupied places of honour on gorgeously-gilded walls; or the gorgeously-gilded bachelor rooms of Mr. Moses Lyon, the picture-dealer in Upper Conduit Street—for Little Billee (I much grieve to say it of a hero of romance) was an excellent man of business. That infinitesimal dose of the good old Oriental blood kept him straight, and not only made him stick to his last through thick and thin, but also to those whose foot his last was found to match (for he couldn't or wouldn't alter his last).

He loved to make as much money as he could, that he might spend it royally in pretty gifts to his mother and sister, whom it was his pleasure to load in this way, and whose circumstances had been very much altered by his quick success. There was never a more generous son or brother than Little Billee of the clouded heart, that couldn't love any longer!

As a set-off to all these splendours, it was also his pleasure now and again to study London life at its lower den—the eastest end of all. Whitechapel, the Minories, the Docks, Ratcliffe Highway, Rotherhithe, soon got to know him well, and he found much to interest him and much to like among their denizens, and made as many friends there among ship-carpenters, excisemen, longshoremen, jack-tars, and what not, as in Bayswater and Belgravia (or Bloomsbury).

He was especially fond of frequenting sing-songs, or 'free-and-easies,' where good hard-working fellows met of an evening to relax and smoke and drink and sing, round a table well loaded with steaming tumblers and pewter pots, at one end of which sits Mr. Chairman in all his glory, and at the other 'Mr. Vice.' They are open to any one who can afford a pipe, a screw of tobacco, and a pint of beer, and who is willing to do his best and sing a song.

No introduction is needed; as soon as any one has seated himself and made himself comfortable, Mr. Chairman taps the table with his long clay pipe, begs for silence, and says to his vis-à-vis: 'Mr.

Vice, it strikes me as the gen'l'man as is just come in 'as got a singing face. Per'aps, Mr. Vice, you'll be so very kind as juster harsk the aforesaid gentl'man to oblige us with a 'armony.'

Mr. Vice then puts it to the new-comer, who, thus appealed to, simulates a modest surprize, and finally professes his willingness, like Mr. Barkis; then, clearing his throat a 'good many times, looks up to the ceiling, and after one or two unsuccessful starts in different keys, bravely sings 'Kathleen Mavourneen,' let us say—perhaps in a touchingly sweet tenor voice:

'Kathleen Mavourneen, the gry dawn is brykin,
The 'orn of the 'unter is 'eard on the 'ill . . .'

And Little Billee didn't mind the dropping of all these aitches if the voice was sympathetic and well in tune, and the sentiment simple, tender, and sincere.

Or else, with a good rolling jingo bass, it was,

'Earts o' hoak are our ships! 'earts o' hoak are our men;
And we'll fight and we'll conkwer agen and agen!'

And no imperfection of accent, in Little Billee's estimation, subtracted one jot from the manly British pluck that found expression in these noble sentiments, nor added one tittle to their swaggering, blatant, and idiotically aggressive vulgarity!

Well, the song finishes with general applause all round. Then the chairman says, 'Your 'ealth and song, sir!' And drinks, and all do the same.

Then Mr. Vice asks, 'What shall we ave the pleasure of saying, sir, after that very nice 'armony?'

And the blushing vocalist, if he knows the ropes, replies, 'A roast leg o' mutton in Newgate, and nobody to eat it!' Or else, 'May 'im as is going up the 'ill o' prosperity never meet a friend coming down!' Or else, 'Ere's to 'er as shares our sorrers and doubles our joys!' Or else, 'Ere's to 'er as shares our joys and doubles our expenses!' and so forth.

More drink, more applause, and many 'ear 'ear's. And Mr. Vice says to the singer: 'You call, sir. Will you be so good as to call on some other gen'l'man for a 'armony?' And so the evening goes on.

And nobody was more quickly popular at such gatherings, or sang better songs, or proposed more touching sentiments, or filled either chair or vice-chair with more grace and dignity than Little Billee. Not even Dodor or l'Zouzou could have beaten him at that.

And he was as happy, as genial, and polite, as much at his ease, in these humble gatherings as in the gilded saloons of the great, where grand-pianos are, and hired accompanists, and highly paid singers, and a good deal of talk while they sing.

So his powers of quick, wide, universal sympathy grew and grew, and made up to him a little for his lost power of being specially fond of special individuals. For he made no close friends among men, and ruthlessly snubbed all attempts at intimacy—all advances

towards an affection which he felt he could not return; and more than one enthusiastic admirer of his talent and his charm was forced to acknowledge that, with all his gifts, he seemed heartless and capricious; as ready to drop you as he had been to take you up.

He loved to be wherever he could meet his kind, high or low; and felt as happy on a penny steamer as on the yacht of a millionaire—on the crowded knifeboard of an omnibus as on the box-seat of a nobleman's drag—happier; he liked to feel the warm contact of his fellow-man at either shoulder and at his back, and didn't object to a little honest grime! And I think all this genial caressing love of his kind, this depth and breadth of human sympathy, are patent in all his work.

On the whole, however, he came to prefer for society that of the best and cleverest of his own class—those who live and prevail by the professional exercise of their own specially-trained and highly-educated wits, the skilled workmen of the brain—from the Lord Chief-Justice of England downward—the salt of the earth, in his opinion; and stuck to them.

There is no class so genial and sympathetic as *our own*, in the long run—even if it be but the criminal class! none where the welcome is likely to be so genuine and sincere, so easy to win, so difficult to outstay, if we be but decently pleasant and successful; none where the memory of us will be kept so green (if we leave any memory at all!).

So Little Billee found it expedient, when he wanted rest and play, to seek them at the houses of those whose rest and play were like his own—little halts in a seeming happy life-journey, full of toil and strain and endeavour; oases of sweet water and cooling shade, where the food was good and plentiful, though the tents might not be of cloth of gold; where the talk was of something more to his taste than court or sport or narrow party politics; the new beauty; the coming match of the season; the coming ducal conversion to Rome; the last elopement in high life—the next! and where the music was that of the greatest music-makers that can be, who found rest and play in making better music for love than they ever made for hire—and were listened to as they should be, with understanding and religious silence, and all the fervent gratitude they deserved.

There were several such houses in London then—and are still—thank Heaven! And Little Billee had his little billet there—and there he was wont to drown himself in waves of lovely sound, or streams of clever talk, or rivers of sweet feminine adulation, seas! oceans!—a somewhat relaxing bath!—and forget for a while his everlasting chronic plague of heart-insensibility, which no doctor could explain or cure, and to which he was becoming gradually resigned—as one does to deafness or blindness or locomotor ataxia—for it had lasted nearly five years! But now and again, during sleep, and in a blissful dream, the lost power of loving—of loving

mother, sister, friend—would be restored to him, just as with a blind man who sometimes dreams he has recovered his sight; and the joy of it would wake him to the sad reality: till he got to know, even in his dream, that he was only dreaming after all, whenever that priceless boon seemed to be his own once more—and did his utmost not to wake. And these were nights to be marked with a white stone, and remembered!

And nowhere was he happier than at the houses of the great surgeons and physicians who interested themselves in his strange disease. When the Little Billees of this world fall ill, the great surgeons and physicians (like the great singers and musicians) do better for them, out of mere love and kindness, than for the princes of the earth, who pay them thousand-guinea fees and load them with honours.

And of all these notable London houses none was pleasanter than that of Cornelys, the great sculptor, and Little Billee was such a favourite in that house that he was able to take his friends Taffy and the Laird there the very day they came to London.

First of all they dined together at a delightful little Franco-Italian pothouse near Leicester Square, where they had *bouillabaisse* (imagine the Laird's delight), and *spaghetti*, and a *poulet rôti*, which is *such* a different affair from a roast fowl! and salad, which Taffy was allowed to make and mix himself; and they all smoked just where they sat, the moment they had swallowed their food—as had been their way in the good old Paris days.

That dinner was a happy one for Taffy and the Laird, with their Little Billee apparently unchanged—as demonstrative, as genial and caressing as ever, and with no swagger to speak of; and with so many things to talk about that were new to them, and of such delightful interest! They also had much to say—but they didn't say very much about Paris, for fear of waking up Heaven knows what sleeping dogs!

And every now and again, in the midst of all this pleasant for-gathering and communion of long-parted friends, the pangs of Little Billee's miserable mind-malady would shoot through him like poisoned arrows.

He would catch himself thinking how fat and fussy and serious about trifles Taffy had become; and what a shiftless, feckless, futile duffer was the Laird; and how greedy they both were, and how red and coarse their ears and gills and cheeks grew as they fed, and how shiny their faces; and how little he would care, try as he might, if they both fell down dead under the table! And this would make him behave more caressingly to them, more genially and demonstratively than ever—for he knew it was all a grewsome physical ailment of his own, which he could no more help than a cataract in his eye!

Then, catching sight of his own face and form in a mirror, he would

curse himself for a puny, misbegotten shrimp, an imp—an abortion—no bigger, by the side of the herculcan Taffy or the burly Laird of Cockpen, than sixpennorth o' halfpence: a wretched little overrated follower of a poor trivial craft—a mere light amuser! For what did pictures matter, or whether they were good or bad, except to the triflers who painted them, the dealers who sold them, the idle, uneducated, purse-proud fools who bought them and stuck them up on their walls because they were told!

And he felt that if a dynamite shell were beneath the table where they sat, and its fuse were smoking under their very noses, he would neither wish to warn his friends nor move himself. He didn't care a d——!

And all this made him so lively and brilliant in his talk, so fascinating and droll and witty, that Taffy and the Laird wondered at the improvement success and the experience of life had wrought in him, and marvelled at the happiness of his lot, and almost found it in their warm affectionate hearts to feel a touch of envy!

Oddly enough, in a brief flash of silence, 'entre la poire et le fromage,' they heard a foreigner at an adjoining table (one of a very noisy group) exclaim: 'Mais quand je vous dis que j'l'ai entendue, moi, La Svengali! et même qu'elle a chanté l'Impromptu de Chopin absolument comme si c'était un piano qu'on jouait! voyons!....'

'Farceur! la bonne blague;!' said another—and then the conversation became so noisily general it was no good listening any more.

'Svengali! how funny that name should turn up! I wonder what's become of *our* Svengali, by the way?' observed Taffy.

'I remember *his* playing Chopin's Impromptu,' said Little Billee; 'what a singular coincidence!'

There were to be more coincidences that night; it never rains them but it pours!

So our three friends finished their coffee and liqueured up, and went to Cornelys's three in a hansom—

'Like Mars,
A-smokin' their poipes and cigyars.'

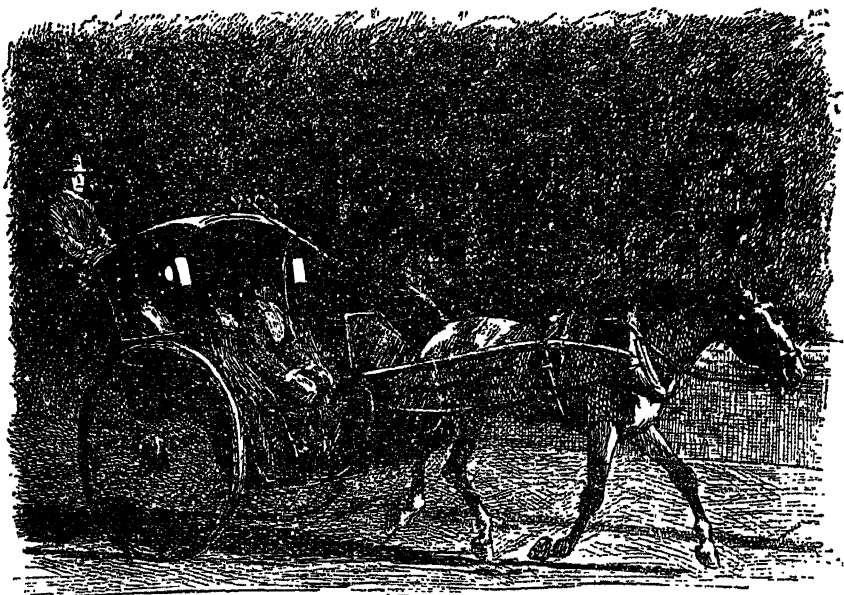
Sir Louis Cornelys, as everybody knows, lives in a palace on Campden Hill, a house of many windows; and whichever window he looks out of, he sees his own garden and very little else. In spite of his eighty years, he works as hard as ever, and his hand has lost but little of its cunning. But he no longer gives those splendid parties that made him almost as famous a host he was an artist.

When his beautiful wife died he shut himself up from the world; and now he never stirs out of his house and grounds except to fulfil his duties at the Royal Academy, and dine once a year with the Queen.

It was very different in the early sixties. There was no pleasanter or more festive house than his in London, winter or summer—no lordlier host than he—no more irresistible hostesses than Lady

Cornelys and her lovely daughters; and if ever music had a right to call itself divine, it was there you heard it—on late Saturday nights during the London season—when the foreign birds of song come over to reap their harvest in London Town.

It was on one of the most brilliant of these Saturday nights that Taffy and the Laird, chaperoned by Little Billee, made their *début* at Mechelen Lodge, and were received at the door of the immense music-room by a tall, powerful man with splendid eyes and a gray beard, and a small velvet cap on his head—and by a Greek matron so beautiful and stately and magnificently attired that they felt



'A-SMOKIN' THEIR POIPES AND CIGYARS'

inclined to sink them on their bended knees as in the presence of some overwhelming Eastern royalty—and were only prevented from doing so, perhaps, by the simple, sweet, and cordial graciousness of her welcome.

And whom should they be shaking hands with next but Antony, Lorrimer, and the Greek—with each a beard and moustache of nearly five years' growth!

But they had no time for much exuberant greeting, for there was a sudden piano crash—and then an immediate silence, as though for pins to drop—and Signor Giuglini and the wondrous maiden Adelina Patti sang the 'Miserere' out of Signor Verdi's most famous opera—to the delight of all but a few very superior ones who had just read Mendelssohn's letters (or misread them) and despised

Italian music, and thought cheaply of 'mere virtuosity,' either vocal or instrumental.

When this was over, Little Billee pointed out all the lions to his friends—from the Prime Minister down to the present scribe—who was right glad to meet them again and talk of auld lang syne, and present them to the daughters of the house and other charming ladies.

Then Roucouly, the great French barytone, sang Durien's favourite song—

'Plaisir d'amour ne dure qu'un moment;
Chagrin d'amour dure toute la vie . . .'

with quite a little drawing-room voice—but quite as divinely as he had sung 'Noël, Noël,' at the Madeleine in full blast one certain Christmas Eve our three friends remembered well.

Then there was a violin solo by young Joachim, then as now the greatest violinist of his time; and a solo on the pianoforte by Madame Schumann, his only peeress! and these came as a wholesome check to the levity of those for whom all music is but an agreeable pastime, a mere emotional delight, in which the intellect has no part; and also as a well-deserved humiliation to all virtuosi who play so charmingly that they make their listeners forget the masters who invented the music in the lesser master who interprets it!

For these two—man and woman—the highest of their kind, never let you forget it was Sebastian Bach they were playing—playing in absolute perfection, in absolute forgetfulness of themselves—so that if you weren't up to Bach, you didn't have a very good time!

But if you were (or wished it to be understood or thought you were), you seized your opportunity and you scored; and by the earnestness of your rapt and tranced immobility, and the stony, gorgon-like intensity of your gaze, you rebuked the frivolous—as you had rebuked them before by the listlessness and carelessness of your bored resignation to the Signorina Patti's trills and fioritures, or M. Roucouly's pretty little French mannerisms.

And what added so much to the charm of this delightful concert was that the guests were not packed together sardine-wise, as they are at most concerts; they were comparatively few and well chosen, and could get up and walk about and talk to their friends between the pieces, and wander off into other rooms and look at endless beautiful things, and stroll in the lovely grounds, by moon or star or Chinese-lantern light.

And there the frivolous could sit and chat and laugh and flirt when Bach was being played inside; and the earnest wander up and down together in soul-communion, through darkened walks and groves and alleys where the sound of French or Italian warblings could not reach them, and talk in earnest tones of the great Zola, or Guy de Maupassant and Pierre Loti, and exult in beautiful English

over the inferiority of English literature, English art, English music, English everything else.

For these high-minded ones who can only bear the sight of classical pictures and the sound of classical music do not necessarily read classical books in any language—no Shakespeares or Dantes or Molières or Goethes for *them*. They know a trick worth two of that!

And the mere fact that these three immortal French writers of light books I have just named had never been heard of at this particular period doesn't very much matter; they had cognate predecessors whose names I happen to forget. Any stick will do to beat a dog with, and history is always repeating itself.

Feydeau, or Flaubert, let us say—or for those who don't know French and cultivate an innocent mind, Miss Austen (for to be dead and buried is almost as good as to be French and immoral!)—and Sebastian Bach, and Sandro Botticelli—that all the arts should be represented. These names are rather discrepant, but they make very good sticks for dog-beating; and with a thorough knowledge and appreciation of these (or the semblance thereof), you were well equipped in those days to hold your own among the elect of intellectual London circles, and snub the philistine to rights.

Then, very late, a tall, good-looking, swarthy foreigner came in, with a roll of music in his hands, and his entrance made quite a stir; you heard all round, 'Here's Glorioli,' or 'Ecco Glorioli,' or 'Voici Glorioli,' till Glorioli got on your nerves. And beautiful ladies, ambassadresses, female celebrities of all kinds, fluttered up to him and cajoled and fawned;—as Svengali would have said, 'Prinzessen, Comtessen, Serene English Altessen!'—and they soon forgot their Highness and their Serenity!

For with very little pressing Glorioli stood up on the platform, with his accompanist by his side at the piano, and in his hands a sheet of music, at which he never looked. He looked at the beautiful ladies, and ogled and smiled; and from his scarcely-parted, moist, thick, bearded lips, which he always licked before singing, there issued the most ravishing sounds that had ever been heard from throat of man or woman or boy! He could sing both high and low and soft and loud, and the frivolous were bewitched, as was only to be expected; but even the earnestest of all, caught, surprised, rapt, astounded, shaken, tickled, teased, harrowed, tortured, tantalised, aggravated, seduced, demoralised, degraded, corrupted into mere naturalness, forgot to dissemble their delight.

And Sebastian Bach (the especially adored of all really great musicians, and also, alas! of many priggish outsiders who don't know a single note and can't remember a single tune) was well forgotten for the night; and who were more enthusiastic than the two great players who had been playing Bach that evening? For these, at all events, were broad and catholic and sincere, and knew what was beautiful, whatever its kind.

It was but a simple little song that Glorioli sang, as light and pretty

as it could well be, almost worthy of the words it was written to, and the words are De Musset's; and I love them so much I cannot resist the temptation of setting them down here, for the mere sensuous delight of writing them, as though I had just composed them myself:

'Bonjour, Suzon, ma fleur des bois!
Es-tu toujours la plus jolie?
Je reviens, tel que tu me vois,
D'un grand voyage en Italie!
Du paradis j'ai fait le tou.—
J'ai fait des vers—j'ai fait l'amour. . . .
Mais que t'importe!
Je passe devant ta maison:
Ouvre ta porte!
Bonjour, Suzon!

'Je t'ai vue au temps des lilas.
Ton cœur joyeux venait d'éclore,
Et tu disais: "Je ne veux pas,
Je ne veux pas qu'on m'aime encore."
Qu'as-tu fait depuis mon départ?
Qui part trop tôt revient trop tard.
Mais que m'importe?
Je passe devant ta maison:
Ouvre ta porte!
Bonjour, Suzon!'

And when it began, and while it lasted, and after it was over, one felt really sorry for all the other singers. And nobody sang any more that night; for Glorioli was tired, and wouldn't sing again, and none were bold enough or disinterested enough to sing after him.

Some of my readers may remember that meteoric bird of song, who, though a mere amateur, would condescend to sing for a hundred guineas in the saloons of the great (as Monsieur Jourdain sold cloth); who would sing still better for love and glory in the studios of his friends.

For Glorioli—the biggest, handsomest, and most distinguished-looking Jew that ever was—one of the Sephardim (one of the Seraphim!)—hailed from Spain, where he was junior partner in the great firm of Moralés, Peralés, Gonzalés, and Glorioli, wine merchants, Malaga. He travelled for his own firm; his wine was good, and he sold much of it in England. But his voice would bring him far more gold in the month he spent here; for his wines have been equalled—if it be not libellous to say so—but there was no voice like his anywhere in the world, and no more finished singer.

Anyhow his voice got into Little Billee's head more than any wine, and the boy could talk of nothing else for days and weeks; and was so exuberant in his expressions of delight and gratitude that the great singer took a real fancy to him (especially when he was told that this fervent boyish admirer was one of the greatest of English painters); and as a mark of his esteem, privately confided to him after supper that every century two human nightingales were born

—only two! a male and a female; and that he, Glorioli, was the representative 'male rossignol of this soi-disant dix-neuvième siècle.'

'I can well believe that! And the female, your mate that should be—*la rossignolle*, if there is such a word?' inquired Little Billee.

'Ah! mon ami.... it was Alboni, till *la petite Adelina Patti* came out a year or two ago; and now it is *La Svengali*.'

'*La Svengali*!'

'Oui, mon fy! You will hear her some day—et vous m'en direz des nouvelles!'

'Why, you don't mean to say that she's got a better voice than Madame Alboni?'

'Mon ami, an apple is an excellent thing—until you have tried a



'BONJOUR, SUZON!'

peach! Her voice to that of Alboni is as a peach to an apple—I give you my word of honour! but bah! the voice is a detail. It's what she does with it—it's incredible! it gives one cold all down the back! it drives you mad! it makes you weep hot tears by the spoonful! Ah! the tear, mon fy! tenez! I can draw everything but *that*! Ça n'est pas dans mes cordes! I can only madden with *love*! But *La Svengali*!.... And then, in the middle of it all, prrrout!.... she makes you laugh! Ah! le beau rire! faire rire avec des larmes plein les yeux—voilà qui me passe!.... Mon ami, when I heard her it made me swear that even *I* would never try to sing any more—it seemed *too* absurd! and I kept my word for a month at least—and you know, je sais ce que je vauz, moi!

'You are talking of *La Svengali*, I bet,' said Signor Spartia.

'Oui, parbleu! You have heard her?'

'Yes—at Vienna last winter,' rejoined the greatest singing-master in the world. 'J'en suis fou! hélas! I thought *I* could teach a woman how to sing, till I heard that blackguard Svengali's pupil. He has married her, they say!'

'That *blackguard* Svengali!' exclaimed Little Billee.... 'why that must be a Svengali I knew in Paris—a famous pianist! a friend of mine!'

'That's the man! also une fameuse crapule (sauf vot' respect); his real name is Adler; his mother was a Polish singer; and he was a



A HUMAN NIGHTINGALE

pupil at the Leipsic Conservatorio. But he's an immense artist, and a great singing-master, to teach a woman like that! and such a woman! belle comme un ange—mais bête comme un pot. I tried to talk to her—all she can say is 'ja wohl,' or 'doch,' or 'nein,' or 'soh!' not a word of English or French or Italian, though she sings them, oh! but *divinely*! It is '*il bel canto*' come back to the world after a hundred years....'

'But what voice is it?' asked Little Billee.

'Every voice a mortal woman can have—three octaves—four! and of such a quality that people who can't tell one tune from another

cry with pleasure at the mere sound of it directly they hear her; just like anybody else. Everything that Paganini could do with his violin, she does with her voice—only better—and what a voice! *un vrai baume!*'

'Now I don't mind petting zat you are schbeaking of La Sfencali,' said Herr Kreutzer, the famous composer, joining in. 'Quelle merfeille, hein? I heard her in St. Betersburg, at ze Vinter Balace. Ze vomen all vent mat, and pulled off zeir beards and tiamonts and kave zem to her—vent town on zeir knees and gried and gissed her hants. She tit not say vun vort! She tit not efen schmile! Ze men schnifelled in ze gorners, and looked at ze bictures, and tissempeld—efen, I, Johann Kreutzer! efen ze Emperor?'

'You're joking,' said Little Billee.

'My vrent, I neffer choke ven I talk apout zinging. You vill hear her zum tay yourzellof, and you vill acree viz me zat zere are two classes of beoble who zing. In ze vun class, La Sfencali; in ze ozzer, all ze ozzer zingers!'

'And does she sing good music?'

'I ton't know. All music is koot ven *she* zings it. I forket ze zong; I can only sink of ze zinger. Any koot zinger can zing a peautiful zong and kif bleasure, I zubboce! But I voot zooner hear La Sfencali zing a scale zan anypotty else zing ze most peautiful zong in ze vorldt—efen vun of my own! Zat is berhaps how zung ze crate Italian zingers of ze last century. It vas a lost art, and she has found it; and she must haf pecun to zing pefore she pecan to schpeak—or else she voot not haf hat ze time to learn all zat she knows, for she is not yet zirty! She zings in Paris in Ogdoper, Gott sei dank! and gums here after Christmas to zing at Trury Lane. Chullien kifs her ten sousand bounts!'

'I wonder, now? Why, that must be the woman I heard at Warsaw two years ago—or three,' said young Lord Witlow. 'It was at Count Siloszech's. He'd heard her sing in the streets, with a tall black-bearded ruffian, who accompanied her on a guitar, and a little fiddling gypsy fellow. She was a handsome woman, with hair down to her knees, but stupid as an owl. She sang at Siloszech's, and all the fellows went mad and gave her their watches and diamond studs and gold scarf-pins. By gad! I never heard or saw anything like it. I don't know much about music myself—couldn't tell "God save the Queen" from "Pop goes the Weasel," if the people didn't get up and stand and take their hats off; but I was as mad as the rest—why, I gave her a little German-silver vinaigrette I'd just bought for my wife; hanged if I didn't—and I was only just married, you know! It's the peculiar twang of her voice, I suppose!'

And hearing all this, Little Billee made up his mind that life had still something in store for him, since he would some day hear La Svengali. Anyhow, he wouldn't shoot himself till then!

Thus the night wore itself away. The Prinzessen, Comtessen,

and Serene English Altessen (and other ladies of less exalted rank) departed home in cabs and carriages; and hostess and daughters went to bed. Late sitters of the ruder sex supped again, and smoked and chatted and listened to comic songs and recitations by celebrated actors. Noble dukes hobnobbed with low comedians; world-famous painters and sculptors sat at the feet of Hebrew capitalists and aitchless millionaires. Judges, cabinet ministers, eminent physicians and warriors and philosophers saw Sunday morning steal over Campden Hill and through the many windows of Mechelen Lodge, and listened to the pipe of half-awakened birds, and smelt the freshness of the dark summer dawn. And as Taffy and the Laird walked home to the Old Hummums by daylight, they felt that last night was ages ago, and that since then they had forgathered with 'much there was of the best in London.' And then they reflected that 'much there was of the best in London' were still strangers to them—except by reputation—for there had not been time for many introductions: and this had made them feel a little out of it; and they found they hadn't had such a very good time after all. And there were no cabs. And they were tired, and their boots were tight.

And the last they had seen of Little Billee before leaving was a glimpse of their old friend in a corner of Lady Cornelys's boudoir, gravely playing cup and ball with Fred Walker for sixpences—both so rapt in the game that they were unconscious of anything else, and both playing so well (with either hand) that they might have been professional champions!

And that saturnine young sawbones, Jakes Talboys (now Sir Jakes, and one of the most genial of Her Majesty's physicians), who, sometimes after supper and champagne, was given to thoughtful, sympathetic, and acute observation of his fellow-men, remarked to the Laird in a whisper that was almost convivial:—

'Rather an enviable pair! Their united ages amount to forty-eight or so, their united weights to about fifteen stone, and they couldn't carry you or me between them. But if you were to roll all the other brains that have been under this roof to-night into one, you wouldn't reach the sum of their united genius.... I wonder which of the two is the most unhappy!'

The season over, the song-birds flown, summer on the wane, his picture, the 'Moon-Dial,' sent to Moses Lyon's (the picture-dealer in Conduit Street), Little Billee felt the time had come to go and see his mother and sister in Devonshire, and make the sun shine twice as brightly for them during a month or so, and the dew fall softer!

So one fine August morning found him at the Great Western Station—the nicest station in all London, I think—except the stations that book you to France and far away.

It always seems so pleasant to be going west! Little Billee loved that station, and often went there for a mere stroll, to watch the people starting on their westward way, following the sun towards

Heaven knows what joys or sorrows, and envy them their sorrows or their joys—any sorrows or joys that were not merely physical, like a chocolate drop or a pretty tune, a bad smell or a toothache.

And as he took a seat in a second-class carriage (it would be third in these democratic days), south corner, back to the engine, with *Silas Marner*, and Darwin's *Origin of Species* (which he was reading for the third time), and *Punch* and other literature of a lighter kind to beguile him on his journey, he felt rather bitterly how happy he could be if the little spot, or knot, or blot, or clot which paralysed that convolution of his brain where he kept his affections could but be conjured away!

The dearest mother, the dearest sister in the world, in the dearest little seaside village (or town) that ever was! and other dear people—especially Alice, sweet Alice with hair so brown, his sister's friend, the simple, pure, and pious maiden of his boyish dreams; and himself, but for that wretched little kill-joy cerebral occlusion, as sound, as healthy, as full of life and energy, as he had ever been!

And when he wasn't reading *Silas Marner*, or looking out of window at the flying landscape, and watching it revolve round its middle distance (as it always seems to do), he was sympathetically taking stock of his fellowpassengers, and mildly envying them, one after another, indiscriminately!

A fat, old, wheezy philistine, with a bulbous nose and only one eye, who had a plain, sickly daughter, to whom he seemed devoted, body and soul; an old lady, who still wept furtively at recollections of the parting with her grandchildren, which had taken place at the station (they had borne up wonderfully, as grandchildren do); a consumptive curate, on the opposite corner seat by the window, whose tender, anxious wife (sitting by his side) seemed to have no thoughts in the whole world but for him; and her patient eyes were his stars of consolation, since he turned to look into them almost every minute, and always seemed a little the happier for doing so. There is no better star-gazing than that!

So Little Billee gave her up *his* corner seat, that the poor sufferer might have those stars where he could look into them comfortably without turning his head.

Indeed (as was his wont with everybody), Little Billee made himself useful and pleasant to his fellowtravellers in many ways—so many that long before they had reached their respective journeys' ends they had almost grown to love him as an old friend, and longed to know who this singularly attractive and brilliant youth, this genial, dainty, benevolent little princekin could possibly be, who was dressed so fashionably, and yet went second class, and took such kind thought of others; and they wondered at the happiness that must be his at merely being alive, and told him more of their troubles in six hours than they told many an old friend in a year.

But he told them nothing about himself—that self he was so sick of—and left them to wonder.

And at his own journey's end, the farthest end of all, he found his mother and sister waiting for him, in a beautiful little pony-carriage—his last gift—and with them sweet Alice, and in her eyes, for one brief moment, that unconscious look of love surprised which is not to be forgotten for years and years and years—which can only be seen by the eyes that meet it, and which, for the time it lasts (just a flash), makes all women's eyes look exactly the same (I'm told): and it seemed to Little Billee that, for the twentieth part of a second, Alice had looked at him with Trilby's eyes; or his mother's, when that he was a little tiny boy.

It all but gave him the thrill he thirsted for! Another twentieth part of a second, perhaps, and his brain-trouble would have melted away; and Little Billee would have come into his own again—the kingdom of love!

A beautiful human eye! Any beautiful eye—a dog's, a deer's, a donkey's, an owl's even! To think of all that it can look, and all that it can see! all that it can even *seem*, sometimes! What a prince among gems! what a star!

But a beautiful eye that lets the broad white light of infinite space (so bewildering and garish and diffused) into one pure virgin heart, to be filtered there! and lets it out again, duly warmed, softened, concentrated, sublimated, focused to a point as in a precious stone, that it may shed itself (a love-laden effulgence) into some stray fellow-heart close by—through pupil and iris, *entre quatre-z-yeux*—the very elixir of life!

Alas! that such a crown-jewel should ever lose its lustre and go blind!

Not so blind or dim, however, but it can still see well enough to look before and after, and inward and upward, and drown itself in tears, and yet not die! And that's the dreadful pity of it. And this is a quite uncalled-for digression; and I can't think why I should have gone out of my way (at considerable pains) to invent it! In fact—

‘Of this ’ere song, should I be axed the reason for to show,
I don't exactly know, I don't exactly know!
But all my fancy dwells upon Nancy.’

‘How pretty Alice has grown, mother! quite lovely, I think! and so nice; but she was always as nice as she could be!’

So observed Little Billee to his mother that evening as they sat in the garden and watched the crescent moon sink to the Atlantic.

‘Ah! my darling Willie! If you *could* only guess how happy you would make your poor old mammy by growing fond of Alice.... And Blanche, too! what a joy for *her*!’

‘Good heavens! mother.... Alice is not for the like of *me*! She's for some splendid young Devon squire, six foot high, and acred and whiskered within an inch of his life!....’

‘Ah, my darling Willie! you are not of those who ask for love in

vain.... If you only *knew* how she believes in you! She almost beats your poor old mammy at *that!*'

And that night he dreamed of Alice—that he loved her as a sweet good woman should be loved; and knew, even in his dream, that it was but a dream; but, oh! it was good! and he managed not to wake; and it was a night to be marked with a white stone! And (still in his dream) she had kissed him, and healed him of his brain-trouble for ever. But when he woke next morning, alas! his brain-trouble was with him still, and he felt that no dream kiss would ever cure it—nothing but a real kiss from Alice's own pure lips!

And he rose thinking of Alice, and dressed and breakfasted thinking of her—and how fair she was, and how innocent, and how well and carefully trained up the way she should go—the beau ideal of a wife.... Could she possibly care for a shrimp like himself?

For in his love of outward form he could not understand that any woman who had eyes to see should ever quite condone the signs of physical weakness in man, in favour of any mental gifts or graces whatsoever.

Little Greek that he was, he worshipped the athlete, and opined that all women without exception—all English women especially—must see with the same eyes as himself.

He had once been vain and weak enough to believe in Trilby's love (with a Taffy standing by—a careless, unsusceptible Taffy, who was like unto the gods of Olympus!)—and Trilby had given him up at a word, a hint—for all his frantic clinging.

She would not have given up Taffy *pour si peu*, had Taffy but a little finger! It is always 'just whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad!' with the likes of Taffy but Taffy hadn't even whistled! Yet still he kept thinking of Alice—and he felt he couldn't think of her well enough till he went out for a stroll by himself on a sheep-trimmed down. So he took his pipe and his Darwin, and out he strolled into the early sunshine—up the green Red Lane, past the pretty church, Alice's father's church—and there, at the gate, patiently waiting for his mistress, sat Alice's dog—an old friend of his, whose welcome was a very warm one.

Little Billee thought of Thackeray's lovely poem in *Pendennis*:

'She comes—she's here—she's past!
May heaven go with her! . . .'

Then he and the dog went together to little bench on the edge of the cliff—within sight of Alice's bedroom window. It was called the Honeymooners' Bench.'

'That look—that look—that look! Ah—but Trilby had looked like that, too! And there are many Taffys in Devon!'

He sat himself down and smoked and gazed at the sea below, which the sun (still in the east) had not yet filled with glare and robbed of the lovely sapphire-blue, shot with purple and dark green, that comes over it now and again of a morning on that most beautiful coast.

There was a fresh breeze from the west, and the long, slow billows broke into creamier foam than ever, which reflected itself as a tender white gleam in the blue concavities of their shining shoreward curves as they came rolling in. The sky was all of turquoise but for the smoke of a distant steamer—a long thin horizontal streak of dun—and there were little brown or white sails here and there, dotting; and the stately ships went on. . . .

Little Billee tried hard to feel all this beauty with his heart as well as his brain—as he had so often done when a boy—and cursed his insensibility out loud for at least the thousand-and-first time.

Why couldn't these waves of air and water be turned into equivalent waves of sound, that he might feel them through the only channel that reached his emotions! That one joy was still left to him—but, alas! alas! he was only a painter of pictures—and not a maker of music!

He recited 'Break, break, break,' to Alice's dog, who loved him and looked up into his face with sapient, affectionate eyes—and whose name, like that of so many dogs in fiction and so few in fact, was simply Tray. For Little Billee was much given to monologues out loud, and profuse quotations from his favourite bards.

Everybody quoted that particular poem either mentally or aloud when they sat on that particular bench—except a few old-fashioned people, who still said,

'Roll on, thou deep and dark blue ocean, roll!'

or people of the very highest culture, who only quoted the nascent (and crescent) Robert Browning: or people of no culture at all, who simply held their tongues—and only felt the more!

Tray listened silently.

'Ah, Tray, the best thing but one to do with the sea is to paint it. The next best thing to that is to bathe in it. The best of all is to lie asleep at the bottom. How would you like that?'

"'And on thy ribs the limpet sticks,
And in thy heart the scrawl shall play. . . .'"

Tray's tail became as a wagging point of interrogation, and he turned his head first on one side and then on the other—his eyes fixed on Little Billee's, his face irresistible in its genial doggy wistfulness.

'Tray, what a singularly good listener you are—and therefore what singularly good manners you've got! I suppose all dogs have!' said Little Billee; and then, in a very tender voice, he exclaimed, 'Alice, Alice, Alice!'

And Tray uttered a soft, cooing, nasal croon in his head register, though he was a barytone dog by nature, with portentous, warlike chest-notes of the jingo order.

'Tray, your mistress is a parson's daughter, and therefore twice as much of a mystery as any other woman in this puzzling world!'

'Tray, if my heart weren't stopped with wax, like the ears of the

companions of Ulysses when they rowed past the sirens—you've heard of Ulysses, Tray? he loved a dog—if my heart weren't stopped with wax, I should be deeply in love with your mistress; perhaps she would marry me if I asked her—there's no accounting for tastes!—and I know enough of myself to know that I should make her a good husband—that I should make her happy—and I should make two other women happy besides.

'As for myself personally, Tray, it doesn't very much matter. One good woman would do as well as another, if she's equally good-looking. You doubt it? Wait till you get a pimple inside your bump of—your bump of—wherever you keep your fondnesses, Tray.

'For that's what's the matter with me—a pimple—just a little clot of blood at the root of a nerve, and no bigger than a pin's point!

'That's a small thing to cause such a lot of wretchedness, and wreck a fellow's life, isn't it? Oh, curse it, curse it—every day and all day long.

'And just as small a thing will take it away, I'm told!

'Ah! grains of sand are small things—and so are diamonds! But diamond or grain of sand, only Alice has got that small thing! Alice alone, in all the world, has got the healing touch for me now; the hands, the lips, the eyes! I know it—I feel it! I dreamed it last night! She looked me well in the face, and took my hand—both hands—and kissed me, eyes and mouth, and told me how she loved me. Ah! what a dream it was! And my little clot melted away like a snowflake on the lips, and I was my old self again, after many years—and all through that kiss of a pure woman.

'I've never been kissed by a pure woman in my life—never! except by my dear mother and sister; and mothers and sisters don't count, when it comes to kissing.

'Ah! sweet physician that she is, and better than all! It will all come back again with a rush, just as I dreamed, and we will have a good time together, we three!...

'But your mistress is a parson's daughter, and believes everything she's been taught from a child, just as you do—at least, I hope so. And I like her for it—and you too.

'She has believed her father—will she ever believe me, who think so differently? And if she does, will it be good for her?—and then, where will her father come in?

'Oh! it's a bad thing to live and no longer believe and trust in your father, Tray! to doubt either his honesty or his intelligence. For he (with your mother to help) has taught you all the best he knows, if he has been a good father—till some one else comes and teaches you better—or worse!

'And then, what are you to believe of what good still remains of all that early teaching—and how are you to sift the wheat from the chaff?....

'Kneel undisturbed, fair saint! I, for one, will never seek to undermine thy faith in any father, on earth or above it!

'Yes, there she kneels in her father's church, her pretty head bowed over her clasped hands, her cloak and skirts falling in happy folds about her: I see it all!

'And underneath, that poor, sweet, soft, pathetic thing of flesh and blood, the eternal woman—great heart and slender brain—for ever enslaved or enslaving, never self-sufficing, never free.... that dear, weak, delicate shape, so cherishable, so perishable, that I've had to paint so often, and know so well by heart! and love ah, how I love it! Only painter-fellows and sculptor-fellows can ever quite know the fulness of that pure love.

'There she kneels and pours forth her praise or plaint, meekly and duly. Perhaps it's for me she's praying.

' "Leave thou thy sister when she prays."

'She believes her poor little prayer will be heard and answered somewhere up aloft. The impossible will be done. She wants what she wants so badly, and prays for it so hard.

'She believes—she believes—what *doesn't* she believe, Tray?

'The world was made in six days. It is just six thousand years old. Once it all lay smothered under rain-water for many weeks, miles deep, because there were so many wicked people about somewhere down in Judee, where they didn't know everything! A costly kind of clearance! And then there was Noah, who *wasn't* wicked, and his most respectable family, and his ark—and Jonah and his whale—and Joshua and the sun, and what not. I remember it all, you see, and oh! such wonderful things that have happened since! And there's everlasting agony for those who don't believe as she does; and yet she is happy; and good, and very kind; for the mere thought of any live creature in pain makes her wretched!

'After all, if she believes in me, she'll believe in anything; let her!

'Indeed, I'm not sure that it's not rather ungainly for a pretty woman *not* to believe in all these good old cosmic taradiddles, as it is for a pretty child not to believe in Little Red Riding-hood, and Jack and the Beanstalk, and Morgiana and the Forty Thieves; we learn them at our mother's knee, and how nice they are! Let us go on believing them as long as we can, till the child grows up and the woman dies and it's all found out.

'Yes, Tray, I will be dishonest for her dear sake. I will kneel by her side if ever I have the happy chance, and ever after, night and morning, and all day long on Sundays if she wants me to! What will I *not* do for that one pretty woman who believes in *me*? I will respect even *that* belief, and do my little best to keep it alive for ever. It is much too precious an earthly boon for *me* to play ducks and drakes with....

'So much for Alice, Tray—your sweet mistress and mine.

'But then, there's Alice's papa—and another pair of sleeves, as we say in France.

'Ought one ever to play at make-believe with a full-grown man for any consideration whatever—even though he be a parson, and a possible father-in-law? *There's* a case of conscience for you!

'When I ask him for his daughter, as I must, and he asks me for my profession of faith, as he will, what can I tell him? The truth?

(And now, I regret to say, the reticent Little Billee is going to show his trusty four-footed friend the least attractive side of his



“SO MUCH FOR ALICE, TRAY”

many-sided nature, its modernity, its dreary scepticism—his own unhappy portion of *la maladie du siècle*). . . .

'But then, what will *he* say? What allowances will *he* make for a poor little weak-kneed, well-meaning waif of a painter-fellow like me, whose only choice lay between Mr. Darwin and the Pope of Rome, and who has chosen once and for ever—and that long ago—before he'd ever even heard of Mr. Darwin's name.

'Besides, why should he make allowances for me? I don't for him. I think no more of a parson than he does of a painter-fellow—and that's precious little, I'm afraid.

'What will he think of a man who says:

“Look here! the God of your belief isn't mine and never will

be—but I love your daughter, and she loves me, and I'm the only man to make her happy!"

'He's no Jephthah; he's made of flesh and blood, although he's a parson—and loves his daughter as much as Shylock loved his.

'Tell me, Tray—thou that livest among parsons—what man, not being a parson himself, can guess how a parson would think, an average parson, confronted by such a poser as that?

'Does he, dare he, *can* he ever think straight or simply on any subject as any other man thinks, hedged in as he is by so many limitations?

'He is as shrewd, vain, worldly, self-seeking, ambitious, jealous, censorious, and all the rest, as you or I, Tray—for all his Christian profession—and just as fond of his kith and kin!

'He is considered a gentleman—which perhaps you and I are not—unless we happen to behave as such; it is a condition of his noble calling. Perhaps it's in order to become a gentleman that he's become a parson! It's about as short a royal road as any to that enviable distinction—as short almost as Her Majesty's commission, and much safer, and much less expensive—within reach of the sons of most fairly successful butchers and bakers and candlestick-makers.

'While still a boy he has bound himself irrevocably to certain beliefs, which he will be paid to preserve and preach and enforce through life, and act up to through thick and thin—at all events in the eyes of others—even his nearest and dearest—even in the wife of his bosom.

'They are his bread and butter, these beliefs—and a man mustn't quarrel with his bread and butter. But a parson must quarrel with those who don't believe as he tells them!

'Yet a few years' thinking and reading and experience of life, one would suppose, might possibly just shake his faith a little (just as though, instead of being parson, he had been tinker, tailor, soldier, sailor, gentleman, apothecary, ploughboy, thief), and teach him that many of these beliefs are simply childish—and some of them very wicked indeed—and most immoral.

'It is very wicked and most immoral to believe, or affect to believe, and tell others to believe, that the unseen, unspeakable, unthinkable Immensity we're all part and parcel of, source of eternal, infinite, indestructible life and light and might, is a kind of wrathful, glorified, and selfglorifying ogre in human shape, with human passions, and most inhuman hates—who suddenly made us out of nothing, one fine day—just for a freak—and made us so badly that we fell the next—and turned us adrift the day after—damned us from the very beginning—*ab ovo—ab ovo usque ad malum*—ha, ha!—and ever since! never gave us a chance!

'All-merciful Father, indeed! Why, the Prince of Darkness was an angel in comparison (and a gentleman into the bargain).

'Just think of it, Tray—a finger in every little paltry pie—an eye

and an ear at every keyhole, even that of the larder, to catch us tripping, and find out if we're praising loud enough, or grovelling low enough, or fasting hard enough—poor God-forsaken worms!

'And if we're naughty and disobedient, everlasting torment for us; torture of so hideous a kind that *we* wouldn't inflict it on the basest criminal, not for one single moment!

'Or else, if we're good and do as we are bid, an eternity of bliss so futile, so idle, and so tame that we couldn't stand it for a week, but for thinking of its one horrible alternative, and of our poor brother for ever and ever roasting away, and howling for the drop of water he never gets.

'Everlasting flame, or everlasting dishonour—nothing between!

'Isn't it ludicrous as well as pitiful—a thing to make one snigger through one's tears? Isn't it a grievous sin to believe in such things as these, and go about teaching and preaching them, and being paid for it—a sin to be heavily chastised, and a shame? What legacy!

'They were shocking bad artists, those conceited, narrow-minded Jews, those poor old doting monks and priests and bigots of the grewsome, dark age of faith! They couldn't draw a bit—no perspective, no anatomy, no *chiaro-oscuro*; and it's a woful image they managed to evolve for us out of the depths of their fathomless ignorance, in their zeal to keep us off all the forbidden fruit we're all so fond of, because we were built like that! And by whom? By our Maker, I suppose (who also made the forbidden fruit, and made it very nice—and put it so conveniently for you and me to see and smell and reach, Tray—and sometimes even pick, alas!).

'And even at that it's a failure, this precious image! Only the very foolish little birds are frightened into good behaviour. The naughty ones laugh and wink at each other, and pull out its hair and beard when nobody's looking, and build their nests out of the straw it's stuffed with (the naughty little birds in black, especially), and pick up what they want under its very nose, and thrive uncommonly well; and the good ones fly away out of sight; and some day, perhaps, find a home in some happy, useful fatherland far away where the Father isn't a bit like this. Who knows?

'And I'm one of the good little birds, Tray—at least, I hope so. And that unknown Father lives in me whether I will or no, and I love Him whether He be or not, just because I can't help it, and with the best and bravest love that can be—the perfect love that believeth no evil, and seeketh no reward, and casteth out fear. For I'm His father as much as He's mine, since I've conceived the thought of Him after my own fashion!

'And He lives in you too, Tray—you and all your kind. Yes, good dog, you king of beasts, I see it in your eyes. . . .

'Ah, *bon Dieu Père, le Dieu des bonnes gens!* Oh! if we only knew for *certain*, Tray! what martyrdom would we not endure, you and I, with a happy smile and a grateful heart—for sheer *love* of such a father! How little should *we* care for the things of this earth!

'But the poor parson?

'He must willy-nilly go on believing, or affecting to believe, just as he is told, *word for word*, or else good-bye to his wife and children's bread and butter, his own preferment, perhaps even his very gentility—that gentility of which his Master thought so little, and he and his are apt to think so much—with possibly the Archbishopric of Canterbury at the end of it, the *bâton de maréchal* that lies in every clerical knapsack.

'What a temptation! one is but human!

'So how can he be honest without believing certain things, to believe which (without shame) one must be as simple as a little child; as, by the way, he is so cleverly told to be in these matters, and so cleverly tells us—and so seldom is himself on any other matter whatever—his own interests, other people's affairs, the world, the flesh, and the devil! And that's clever of him too. . . .

'And if he chooses to be as simple as a little child, why shouldn't I treat him as a little child, for his own good, and fool him to the top of his little bent for his dear daughter's sake, that I may make her happy, and thereby him too?

'And if he's *not* quite so simple as all that, and makes artful little compromises with his conscience—for a good purpose, of course—why shouldn't I make artful little compromises with mine, and for a better purpose still, and try to get what I want in the way *he* does? I want to marry his daughter far worse than he can ever want to live in a palace, and ride in a carriage and pair with a mitre on the panels.

'If he *cheats*, why shouldn't I cheat too?

'If *he* cheats, he cheats everybody all round—the wide, wide world, and something wider and higher still that can't be measured, something in himself. *I* only cheat *him*!

'If he cheats, he cheats for the sake of very worldly things indeed—tithes, honours, influence, power, authority, social consideration and respect—not to speak of bread and butter! *I* only cheat for the love of a lady fair—and cheating for cheating, I like my cheating best.

'So, whether he cheats or not, I'll—

'Confound it! what would old Taffy do in such a case, I wonder?

'Oh, bother! it's no good wondering what old Taffy would do.

'Taffy never wants to marry *anybody's* daughter; he doesn't even want to paint her! He only wants to paint his beastly ragamuffins and thieves and drunkards, and be left alone.

'Besides, Taffy's as simple as a little child himself and couldn't fool any one, and wouldn't if he could—not even a parson. But if any one tries to fool *him*, my eyes! don't he cut up rough, and call names, and kick up a shindy, and even knock people down! That's the worst of fellows like Taffy. They're too good for this world and too solemn. They're impossible, and lack all sense of humour. In point of fact Taffy's a *gentleman*—poor fellow! *et puis voilà!*

'I'm not simple—worse luck; and I can't knock people down—I wish I could! I can only paint them! and not even *that* "as they really are!"....

Good old Taffy!....

'Faint heart never won fair lady!

'Oh, happy, happy thought—I'll be brave and win!

'I can't knock people down, or do doughty deeds, but I'll be brave in my own little way—the only way I can....

'I'll simply lie through thick and thin—I must—I will—nobody need ever be a bit the wiser! I can do more good by lying than by telling the truth, and make more deserving people happy, including myself and the sweetest girl alive—the end shall justify the means: that's my excuse, my only excuse! and this lie of mine is on so stupendous a scale that it will have to last me for life. It's my only one, but its name is *Lion*! and I'll never tell another as long as I live.

'And now that I know what temptation really is, I'll never think any harm of any parson any more....never, never, never!'

So the little man went on, as if he knew all about it, had found it all out for himself, and nobody else had ever found it out before! and I am responsible for his ways of thinking (which are not necessarily my own).

It must be remembered, in extenuation, that he was very young, and not very wise: no philosopher, no scholar—just a painter of lovely pictures; only that and nothing more. Also, that he was reading Mr. Darwin's immortal book for the third time, and it was a little too strong for him; also, that all this happened in the early sixties, long ere Religion had made up her mind to meet Science half-way, and hobnob and kiss and be friends. Alas! before such a lying down of the lion and the lamb can ever come to pass, Religion will have to perform a larger share of the journey than half, I fear!

Then, still carried away by the flood of his own eloquence (for he had never had such an innings as this, nor such a listener), he again apostrophised the dog Tray, who had been growing somewhat inattentive (like the reader, perhaps), in language more beautiful than ever:

'Oh, to be like you, Tray—and secrete love and goodwill from morn till night, from night till morning—like saliva, without effort! with never a moment's cessation of flow, even in disgrace and humiliation! How much better to love than to be loved—to love as you do, my Tray—so warmly, so easily, so unremittingly—to forgive all wrongs and neglect and injustice so quickly and so well—and forget a kindness never! Lucky dog that you are!

"Oh! could I feel as I have felt, or be as I have been,
Or weep as I could have once wept, o'er many a vanished scene,
As springs in deserts found seem sweet, all brackish tho' they be,
So 'midst this withered waste of life those tears would flow to me!"

'What do you think of those lines, Tray? I *love* them, because

my mother taught them to me when I was about your age—six years old, or seven! and before the bard who wrote them had fallen; like Lucifer, son of the morning! Have you ever heard of Lord Byron, Tray? He too, like Ulysses, loved a dog, and many people think that's about the best there is to be said of him nowadays! Poor Humpty Dumpty! Such a swell as he once was! Not all the king's horses, nor all the—'

Here Tray jumped up suddenly and bolted—he saw some one else he was fond of, and ran to meet him. It was the vicar, coming out of his vicarage.

A very nice-looking vicar—fresh, clean, alert, well tanned by sun and wind and weather—a youngish vicar still; tall, stout, gentlemanlike, shrewd, kindly, wordly, a trifle pompous, and authoritative more than a trifle; not much given to abstract speculation, and thinking fifty times more of any sporting and orthodox young country squire, well-inched and well-acred (and well-whiskered), than of all the painters in Christendom.

"When Greeks joined Greeks, then was the tug of war,"' thought Little Billee; and he felt a little uncomfortable. Alice's father had never loomed so big and impressive before, or so distressingly nice to look at.

'Welcome, my Apelles, to your ain countree, which is growing quite proud of you, I declare! Young Lord Archie Waring was saying only last night that he wished he had half your talent! He's *crazed* about painting, you know, and actually wants to be a painter himself! The poor dear old marquis is quite sore about it'.

With this happy exordium the parson stopped and shook hands; and they both stood for a while, looking seaward. The parson said the usual things about the sea—its blueness, its grayness, its greenness, its beauty, its sadness, its treachery.

"Who shall put forth on thee,
Unfathomable sea!"'

'Who indeed!' answered Little Billee, quite agreeing. 'I vote we don't, at all events.' So they turned inland.

The parson said the usual things about the land (from the country-gentleman's point of view), and the talk began to flow quite pleasantly, with quoting of the usual poets, and capping of quotations in the usual way—for they had known each other many years, both here and in London. Indeed, the vicar had once been Little Billee's tutor.

And thus, amicably, they entered a small wooded hollow. Then the vicar, turning of a sudden his full blue gaze on the painter, asked, sternly—

'What book's that you've got in your hand, Willie?'

'A—a—it's the *Origin of Species*, by Charles Darwin. I'm very f-f-fond of it. I'm reading it for the third time. It's very g-g-good. It *accounts* for things, you know.'

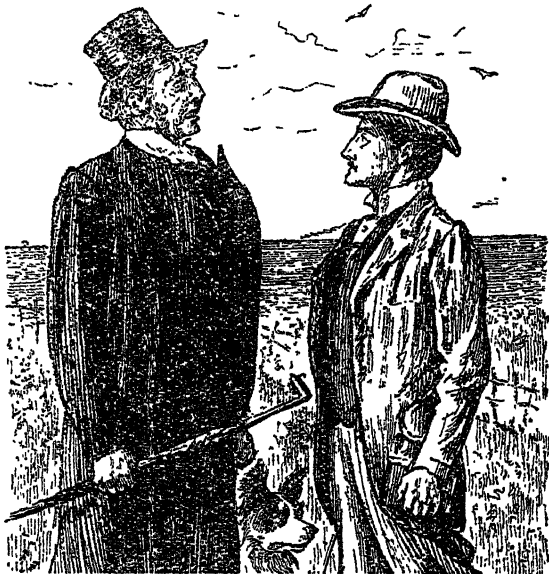
Then, after a pause, and still more sternly—

'What place of worship do you most attend in London—especially of an evening, William?'

Then stammered Little Billee, all self-control forsaking him—

'I d-d-don't attend any place of worship at all—morning, afternoon, or evening. I've long given up going to church altogether. I can only be frank with you; I'll tell you why....'

And as they walked along the talk drifted on to very momentous subjects indeed, and led, unfortunately, to a serious falling out—for which probably both were to blame—and closed in a distressful



" 'YOU'RE A THIEF, SIR!' "

way at the other end of the little wooded hollow—a way most sudden and unexpected, and quite grievous to relate. When they emerged into the open, the parson was quite white, and the painter crimson.

'Sir,' said the parson, squaring himself up to more than his full height and breadth and dignity, his face big with righteous wrath, his voice full of strong menace—'sir, you're—you're a—you're a *thief*, sir, a *thief*! You're trying to *rob me of my Saviour*! Never you dare to darken *my door-step* again!'

'Sir,' said Little Billee, with a bow, 'if it comes to calling names, you're—you're a—no; you're Alice's father; and whatever else you are besides, I'm another for trying to be honest with a parson; so good-morning to you.'

And each walked off in an opposite direction, stiff as pokers;

and Tray stood between, looking first at one receding figure, then at the other, disconsolate.

And thus Little Billee found out that he could no more lie than he could fly. And so he did not marry sweet Alice after all, and no doubt it was ordered for her good and his. But there was tribulation for many days in the house of Bagot, and for many months in one tender, pure, and pious bosom.

And the best and the worst of it all is that, not very many years after, the good vicar—more fortunate than most clergymen who dabble in stocks and shares—grew suddenly very rich through a lucky speculation in Irish beer, and suddenly, also, took to thinking seriously about things (as a man of business should)—more seriously than he had ever thought before. So at least the story goes in North Devon, and it is not so new as to be incredible. Little doubts grew into big ones—big doubts resolved themselves into downright negations. He quarrelled with his bishop; he quarrelled with his dean; he even quarrelled with his 'poor dear old marquis,' who died before there was time to make it up again. And finally he felt it his duty, in conscience, to secede from a Church which had become too narrow to hold him, and took himself and his belongings to London, where at least he could breathe. But there he fell into a great disquiet, for the long habit of feeling himself always *en évidence*—of being looked up to and listened to without contradiction; of exercising influence and authority in spiritual matters (and even temporal); of impressing women, especially, with his commanding presence, his fine sonorous voice, his lofty brow, so serious and smooth, his soft, big, waving hands, which soon lost their country tan—all this had grown as a second nature to him, the breath of his nostrils, a necessity of his life. So he rose to be the most popular Positivist preacher of his day, and pretty broad at that.

But his dear daughter Alice, she stuck to the old faith, and married a venerable High-Church archdeacon, who very cleverly clutched at and caught her and saved her for himself just as she stood shivering on the very brink of Rome; and they were neither happy nor unhappy together—*un ménage bourgeois, ni beau ni laid, ni bon ni mauvais*. And thus, alas! the bond of religious sympathy, that counts for so much in united families, no longer existed between father and daughter, and the heart's division divided them. *Ce que c'est que de nous! . . .* The pity of it!

And so no more of sweet Alice with hair so brown.

PART SIXTH

'Vraiment, la reine auprès d'elle était laide
Quand, vers le soir,
Elle passait sur le pont Tolède
En corset noir!
Un chapelet du temps de Charlemagne
Ornait son cou. . . .
*Le vent qui vient à travers la montagne
Me rendra fou!*

'Dansez, chantez, villageois! la nuit tombe. . . .
Sabine, un jour,
A tout donné—sa beauté de colombe,
Et son amour—
Pour un anneau du Comte de Saldagne,
Pour un bijou. . . .
*Le vent qui vient à travers la montagne
M'a rendu fou!*

BEHOLD our three musketeers of the brush once more reunited in Paris, famous, after long years.

In emulation of the good Dumas, we will call it 'cinq ans après.' It was a little more.

Taffy stands for Porthos and Athos rolled into one since he is big and good-natured, and strong enough to 'assommer un homme d'un coup de poing,' and also stately and solemn, of aristocratic and romantic appearance, and not too fat—not too much ongbong-pwang, as the Laird called it—and also he does not dislike a bottle of wine, or even two, and looks as if he had a history.

The Laird, of course, is D'Artagnan, since he sells his pictures well, and by the time we are writing of has already become an Associate of the Royal Academy; like Quentin Durward, this D'Artagnan was a Scotsman:

'Ah, wasna he a Roguey, this piper of Dundee!'

And Little Billee, the dainty friend of duchesses, must stand for Aramis, I fear! It will not do to push the simile too far; besides, unlike the good Dumas, one has a conscience. One does not play ducks and drakes with historical facts, or tamper with historical personages. And if Athos, Porthos, and Co. are not historical by this time, I should like to know who are!

Well, so are Taffy, the Laird, and Little Billee—*tout ce qu'il y a de plus historique!*

Our three friends, well groomed, frock-coated, shirt-collared within an inch of their lives, duly scarfed and scarf-pinned, chimney-pot-hatted, and most beautifully trousered, and balmorally booted, or neatly spatted (or whatever was most correct at the time), are breakfasting together on coffee, rolls, and butter at a little round

table in the huge courtyard of an immense caravansérail, paved with asphalt, and covered in at the top with a glazed roof that admits the sun and keeps out the rain—and the air.

A magnificent old man as big as Taffy, in black cloth coat and breeches and black silk stockings, and a large metal chain round his neck and chest, looks down like Jove from a broad flight of marble steps—as though to welcome the coming guests, who arrive in cabs and railway omnibuses through a huge archway on the boulevard; or to speed those who part through a lesser archway opening on to a side street.

'Bon voyage, messieurs et dames!'

At countless other little tables other voyagers are breakfasting or ordering breakfast; or, having breakfasted, are smoking and chatting and looking about. It is a babel of tongues—the cheerfullest, busiest, merriest scene in the world, apparently the costly place of rendezvous for all wealthy Europe and America; an atmosphere of bank-notes and gold.

Already Taffy has recognised (and been recognised by) half a dozen old fellow-Crimeans, of unmistakable military aspect like himself; and three canny Scotsmen have discreetly greeted the Laird; and as for Little Billee, he is constantly jumping up from his breakfast and running to this table or that, drawn by some irresistible British smile of surprised and delighted female recognition: 'What you here? How nice! Come over to hear La Svengali, I suppose!'

At the top of the marble steps is a long terrace, with seats and people sitting, from which tall glazed doors, elaborately carved and gilded, give access to luxurious drawing-rooms, dining-rooms, reading-rooms, lavatories, postal and telegraph offices; and all round and about are huge square green boxes, out of which grow tropical and exotic evergreens all the year round—with beautiful names that I have forgotten. And leaning against these boxes are placards announcing what theatrical or musical entertainments will take place in Paris that day or night; and the biggest of these placards (and the most fantastically decorated) informs the cosmopolite world that Madame Svengali intends to make her first appearance in Paris that very evening, at nine punctually, in the Cirque des Bashibazoucks, Rue St. Honoré!

Our friends had only arrived the previous night, but they had managed to secure stalls a week beforehand. No places were any longer to be got for love or money. Many people had come to Paris on purpose to hear La Svengali—many famous musicians from England and everywhere else—but they would have to wait many days.

The fame of her was like a rolling snow-ball that had been rolling all over Europe for the last two years—wherever there was snow to be picked up in the shape of golden ducats.

Their breakfast over, Taffy, the Laird, and Little Billee, cigar in mouth, arm-in-arm, the huge Taffy in the middle (*comme autrefois*),

crossed the sunshiny boulevard into the shade, and went down the Rue de la Paix, through the Place Vendôme and the Rue Castiglione to the Rue de Rivoli—quite leisurely, and with a tender midriff-warming sensation of freedom and delight at almost every step.

Arrived at the corner pastrycook's, they finished the stumps of their cigars as they looked at the well-remembered show in the window; then they went in and had, Taffy a Madeleine, the Laird a Baba, and Little Billee a Savarin—and each, I regret to say, a liqueurglass of *rhum de la Jamaïque*.

After this they sauntered through the Tuileries Gardens, and by the quay to their favourite Pont des Arts, and looked up and down the river—*comme autrefois*!

It is an enchanting prospect at any time and under any circumstances; but on a beautiful morning in mid-October, when you haven't seen it for five years, and are still young! and almost every stock and stone that meets your eye, every sound, every scent, has some sweet and subtle reminder for you——

Let the reader have no fear. I will not attempt to describe it. I shouldn't know where to begin (nor when to leave off!).

Not but what many changes had been wrought; many old landmarks were missing. And among them, as they found out a few minutes later, and much to their chagrin, the good old Morgue!

They inquired of a *gardien de la paix*, who told them that a new Morgue—'une bien jolie Morgue, ma foi!'—and much more commodious and comfortable than the old one, had been built beyond Notre Dame, a little to the right.

'Messieurs devraient voir ça—on y est très bien!'

But Notre Dame herself was still there, and La Sainte Chapelle and Le Pont Neuf, and the equestrian statue of Henri IV. *C'est toujours ça!*

And as they gazed and gazed, each framed unto himself, mentally, a little picture of the Thames they had just left—and thought of Waterloo Bridge, and St. Paul's, and London—but felt no homesickness whatever, no desire to go back in a hurry!

And looking down the river westward there was but little change.

On the left-hand side the terraces and garden of the Hôtel de la Rochemartel (the sculptured entrance of which was in the Rue de Lille) still overtopped the neighbouring houses and shaded the quay with tall trees, whose lightly-falling leaves yellowed the pavement for at least a hundred yards of frontage—or backage, rather; for this was but the rear of that stately palace.

'I wonder if l'Zouzou has come into his dukedom yet?' said Taffy.

And Taffy the realist, Taffy the modern of moderns, also said many beautiful things about old historical French dukedoms; which, in spite of their plentifulness, were so much more picturesque than English ones, and constituted a far more poetical and romantic

link with the past; partly on account of their beautiful, high-sounding names!

'Amaury de Brissac de Roncesvaux de la Rochemartel-Boisségur! what a generous mouthful! Why, the very sound of it is redolent of the twelfth century! Not even Howard of Norfolk can beat that!'

For Taffy was getting sick of 'this ghastly thin-faced time of ours,' as he sadly called it (quoting from a strange and very beautiful poem called 'Faustine,' which had just appeared in the *Spectator*—and which our three enthusiasts already knew by heart), and beginning to love all things that were old and regal and rotten and forgotten and of bad repute, and to long to paint them just as they really were.

'Ah! they managed these things better in France, especially in the twelfth century, and even the thirteenth!' said the Laird. 'Still, Howard of Norfolk isn't bad at a pinch—*fote de myoo!*' he continued, winking at Little Billee. And they promised themselves that they would leave cards on Zouzou, and if he wasn't a duke, invite him to dinner; and also Dodor, if they could manage to find him.

Then along the quay and up the Rue de Seine, and by well-remembered little mystic ways to the old studio in the Place St. Anatole des Arts.

Here they found many changes. A row of new houses on the north side, by Baron Haussmann—the well-named—a boulevard was being constructed right through the place. But the old house had been respected; and looking up, they saw the big north window of their good old abode blindless and blank and black, but for a white placard in the middle of it with the words: 'A louer. Un atelier, et une chambre à coucher.'

They entered the courtyard through the little door in the porte cochère, and beheld Madame Vinard standing on the step of her loge, her arms akimbo, giving orders to her husband—who was sawing logs for firewood, as usual at that time of the year—and telling him he was the most helpless log of the lot.

She gave them one look, threw up her arms, and rushed at them, saying, 'Ah, mon Dieu! les trois Angliches!'

And they could not have complained of any lack of warmth in her greeting, or in Monsieur Vinard's.

'Ah! mais quel bonheur de vous revoir! Et comme vous avez bonne mine, tous! Et Monsieur Litrebili, donc! il a grandi!' etc., etc. 'Mais vous allez boire la goutte avant tout—vite, Vinard! Le ratafia de cassis que Monsieur Durien nous a envoyé la semaine dernière!'

And they were taken into the loge and made free of it—welcomed like prodigal sons; a fresh bottle of black-currant brandy was tapped, and did duty for the fatted calf. It was an ovation, and made quite a stir in the Quartier.

Le Retour des trois Angliches—cinq ans après!

She told them all the news: about Bouchardy; Papelard; Jules Guinot, who was now in the Ministère de la Guerre; Barizel, who had given up the arts and gone into his father's business (umbrellas); Durien, who had married six months ago, and had a superb atelier in the Rue Taitbout, and was coining money; about her own family—Aglæ, who was going to be married to the son of the charbonnier at the corner of the Rue de la Canicule—'un bon mariage; bien solide!' Niche, who was studying the piano at the Conservatoire, and had won the silver medal; Isidore, who, alas! had gone to the bad—'perdu par les femmes! un si joli garçon, vous concevez! ça ne lui a pas porté bonheur, par exemple!' And yet she was proud! and said his father would never have had the pluck!

'À dix-huit ans, pensez donc!'

'And that good Monsieur Carrel; he is dead, you know! Ah, messieurs savaient ça? Yes, he died at Dieppe, his natal town, during the winter, from the consequences of an indigestion—que voulez-vous! He always had the stomach so feeble!... Ah, the beautiful interment, messieurs! Five thousand people, in spite of the rain! Car il pleuvait averse! And M. le Maire and his adjunct walking behind the hearse, and the gendarmerie and the douaniers, and a bataillon of the douzième chasseurs-à-pied, with their music, and all the sapperpumpers, en grande tenue with their beautiful brass helmets! All the town was there, following: so there was nobody left to see the procession go by! q'c'était beau! Mon Dieu, q'c'était beau! c'que j'ai pleuré, d'voir ça! n'est-ce-pas, Vinard?'

'Dame, oui, ma biche! j'crois bien! It might have been Monsieur le Maire himself that one was interring in person!'

'Ah, ça! voyons, Vinard; thou'rt not going to compare the Maire of Dieppe to a painter like Monsieur Carrel?'

'Certainly not, ma biche! But still, M. Carrel was a great man all the same, in his way. Besides, I wasn't there—nor thou either, as to that!'

'Mon Dieu! comme il est idiot, ce Vinard—of a stupidity to cut with a knife! Why, thou might'st almost be a Mayor thyself, sacred imbecile that thou art!'

And an animated discussion arose between husband and wife as to the respective merits of a country mayor on one side and a famous painter and a member of the Institute on the other, during which *les trois Angliches* were left out in the cold. When Madame Vinard had sufficiently routed her husband, which did not take very long, she turned to them again, and told them that she had started a *magasin de bric-à-brac*, 'vous verrez ça!'

Yes, the studio had been to let for three months. Would they like to see it? Here were the keys. They would, of course, prefer to see it by themselves, alone; 'jc comprends ça! et vous verrez ce que vous verrez!' Then they must come and drink once more again the drop, and inspect her *magasin de bric-à-brac*.

So they went up, all three, and let themselves into the old place where they had been so happy—and one of them for a while so miserable!

It was changed indeed.

Bare of all furniture, for one thing; shabby and unswept, with a pathetic air of dilapidation, spoliation, desecration, and a musty, shut-up smell; the window so dirty you could hardly see the new houses opposite; the floor a disgrace!

All over the walls were caricatures in charcoal and white chalk,



“AH! THE BEAUTIFUL INTERMENT, MESSIEURS!”

with more or less incomprehensible legends; very vulgar and trivial and coarse, some of them, and pointless for *trois Angliches*.

But among these (touching to relate) they found, under a square of plate-glass that had been fixed on the wall by means of an oak frame, Little Billee's old black-and-white-and-red chalk sketch of Trilby's left foot, as fresh as if it had been done only yesterday! Over it was written: ‘Souvenir de la Grande Trilby, par W. B. (Litrebili).’ And beneath, carefully engrossed on imperishable parchment, and pasted on the glass, the following stanzas:—

‘Pauvre Trilby—la belle et bonne et chère!
Je suis son pied. Devine qui voudra
Quel tendre ami, la chérissant naguère,
Encadra d'elle (et d'un amour sincère)
Ce souvenir charmant qu'un caprice inspira—
Qu'un souffle emportera!’

'J'étais jumcau: qu'est devenu mon frère?
Hélas! Hélas! L'Amour nous égara.
L'Eternité nous unira, j'espère;
Et nous ferons comme autrefois la paire
Au fond d'un lit bien chaste où nul ne troublera
Trilby—qui dormira.

'Ô tendre ami, sans nous qu'allez-vous faire?
La porte est close où Trilby demeura.
Le Paradis est loin . . . et sur la terre
(Qui nous fut douce et lui sera légère)
Pour trouver nos pareils, si bien qu'on cherchera—
Beau chercher l'on aura!'



'PAUVRE TRILBY'

Taffy drew a long breath into his manly bosom, and kept it there as he read this characteristic French doggerel (for so he chose to call this touching little symphony in *ère* and *ra*). His huge frame thrilled with tenderness and pity and fond remembrance, and he said to himself (letting out his breath): 'Dear, dear Trilby! Ah! if you had only cared for *me*, I wouldn't have let you give me up—not for any one on earth. *You* were the mate for *me*!'

And that, as the reader had guessed long ago, was big Taffy's 'history.'

The Laird was also deeply touched, and could not speak. Had he been in love with Trilby, too? Had he ever been in love with any one?

He couldn't say. But he thought of Trilby's sweetness and unselfishness, her gaiety, her innocent kissings and caressings, her drollery and frolicsome grace, her way of filling whatever place she was in with her presence, the charming sight and the genial sound of her; and felt that no girl, no woman, no lady he had ever seen yet was a match for this poor waif and stray, this long-legged, cancan-dancing, Quartier Latin grisette, blanchisseuse de fin, 'and Heaven knows what besides!'

'Hang it all!' he mentally ejaculated, 'I wish to goodness I'd married her *myself*!'

Little Billee said nothing either. He felt unhappier than he had ever once felt for five long years—to think that he could gaze on such a memento as this, a thing so strongly personal to himself, with dry eyes and a quiet pulse! and he unemotionally, dispassionately, wished himself dead and buried for at least the thousand-and-first time!

All three possessed casts of Trilby's hands and feet, and photographs of herself. But nothing so charmingly suggestive of Trilby as this little masterpiece of a true artist, this happy fluke of a happy moment. It was Trilby herself, as the Laird thought, and should not be suffered to perish.

They took the keys back to Madame Vinard in silence.

She said: 'Vous avez vu—n'est-ce pas, messieurs?—le pied de Trilby! c'est bien gentil! C'est Monsieur Durien qui a fait mettre le verre, quand vous êtes partis; et Monsieur Guinot qui a composé l'*épitaphe*. Pauvre Trilby! qu'est ce qu'elle est devenue! comme elle était bonne fille, hein? et si belle! et comme elle était vive elle était vive elle était vive! Et comme elle vous aimait tous bien—et surtout Monsieur Litrebili—n'est-ce pas?'

Then she insisted on giving them each another liqueurglass of Durien's ratafia de cassis, and took them to see her collection of *bric-à-brac* across the yard, a gorgeous show, and explained everything about it—how she had begun in quite a small way, but was making it a big business.

'Voyez cette pendule! It is of the time of Louis Onze, who gave it with his own hands to Madame de Pompadour (!). I bought it at a sale in——'

'Combiang?' said the Laird.

'C'est cent-cinquante francs, monsieur—c'est bien bon marché—une véritable occasion, et——'

'Je prong!' said the Laird, meaning 'I take it!'

Then she showed them a beautiful brocade gown 'which she had picked up a bargain at——'

'Combiang?' said the Laird.

'Ah, ça, c'est trois cents francs, monsieur. Mais——'

'Je prong!' said the Laird.

'Et voici les souliers qui vont avec, et que——'

'Je pr——'

But here Taffy took the Laird by the arm and dragged him by force out of this too seductive siren's cave.

The Laird told her where to send his purchases, and with many expressions of love and good-will on both sides, they tore themselves away from Monsieur et Madame Vinard.

The Laird, however, rushed back for a minute, and hurriedly whispered to Madame Vinard: 'Oh—er—le piay de Trilby—sur le



'"JE PRONG!"'

mure, vous savvy—avec le verre et toot le reste—coopy le mure—compreenny?.... Combiang?'

'Ah, monsieur!' said Madame Vinard—'c'est un peu difficile, vous savez—couper un mur comme ça! On parlera au propriétaire si vous voulez, et ca pourrait peut-être s'arranger, si c'est en bois! seulement il fau——'

'Je prong!' said the Laird, and waved his hand in farewell.

They went up the Rue Vieille des Trois Mauvais Ladres, and found that about twenty yards of a high wall had been pulled down—just at the bend where the Laird had seen the last of Trilby, as she turned round and kissed her hand to him—and they beheld, within,

a quaint and ancient long-neglected garden; a gray old garden, with tall, warty, black-boled trees, and damp, green, mossy paths that lost themselves under the brown and yellow leaves and mould and muck which had drifted into heaps here and there, the accumulation of years—a queer old faded pleasance, with wasted bowers and dilapidated carved stone benches and weather-beaten discoloured marble statues—noseless, armless, earless fauns and hamadryads! And at the end of it, in a tumble-down state of utter ruin, a still inhabited little house, with shabby blinds and window-curtains, and broken window-panes mended with brown paper—a Pavillon de Flore, that must have been quite beautiful a hundred years ago—the once mysterious love-resort of long-buried abbés with light hearts, and well-forgotten lords and ladies gay—red-heeled, patched, powdered, frivolous, and shameless, but, oh! how charming to the imagination of the nineteenth century! And right through the ragged lawn (where lay, upset in the long dewy grass, a broken doll's perambulator by a tattered Polichinelle) went a desecrating track made by cart-wheels and horses' hoofs; and this, no doubt, was to be a new street—perhaps, as Taffy suggested, 'La Rue *Neuve* des Trois Mauvais Ladres!' (The *new* street of the three bad lepers!)

'Ah, Taffy!' sententiously opined the Laird, with his usual wink at Little Billee—'I've no doubt the *old* lepers were the best, bad as they were!'

'I'm quite *sure* of it!' said Taffy, with sad and sober conviction and a long-drawn sigh. 'I only wish I had a chance of painting one—just as he really was!'

How often they had speculated on what lay hidden behind that lofty old brick wall! and now this melancholy little peep into the once festive past, the touching sight of this odd old poverty-stricken abode of Heaven knows what present grief and desolation, which a few strokes of the pickaxe had laid bare, seemed to chime in with their own gray mood that had been so bright and sunny an hour ago; and they went on their way quite dejectedly, for a stroll through the Luxembourg Gallery and Gardens.

The same people seemed to be still copying the same pictures in the long, quiet, genial room, so pleasantly smelling of oil-paint—Rosa Bonheur's 'Labourage Nivernais,' Hébert's, 'Malaria,' Couture's 'Decadent Romans.'

And in the formal dusty gardens were the same pioupious and zouzous still walking with the same nounous, or sitting by their sides on benches by formal ponds with gold and silver fish in them—and just the same old couples petting the same toutous and loulous!¹

Then they thought they would go and lunch at le père Trin's

¹ *Glossary*.—Pioupiau (*alias* pousse-caillou, *alias* tourlourou)—a private soldier of the line. Zouzou—a Zouave. Nounou—a wet nurse with a pretty ribboned cap and long streamers. Toutou—a nondescript French lapdog, of no breed known to Englishmen (a regular little beast!). Loulou—a Pomeranian dog—not much better.

—the Restaurant de la Couronne, in the Rue du Luxembourg—for the sake of auld lang syne! But when they got there, the well-remembered fumes of that humble refectory, which had once seemed not unappetising, turned their stomachs. So they contented themselves with warmly greeting le père Trin, who was quite overjoyed to see them again, and anxious to turn the whole establishment topsy-turvy that he might entertain such guests as they deserved.

Then the Laird suggested an omelet at the Café de l'Odéon. But Taffy said, in his masterful way, 'Damn the Café de l'Odéon!'

And hailing a little open fly, they drove to Ledoyen's, or some such place, in the Champs Elysées, where they feasted as became three prosperous Britons out for a holiday in Paris—three irresponsible musketeers, lords of themselves and Lutetia, *beati possidentes!*—and afterwards had themselves driven in an open carriage and pair through the Bois de Boulogne to the fête de St. Cloud (or what still remained of it, for it lasts six weeks), the scene of so many of Dodor's and Zouzou's exploits in past years, and found it more amusing than the Luxembourg Gardens; the lively and irrepressible spirit of Dodor seemed to pervade it still.

But it doesn't want the presence of a Dodor to make the blue-bloused sons of the Gallic people (and its neatly-shod, white-capped daughters) delightful to watch as they take their pleasure. And the Laird (thinking perhaps of Hampstead Heath on an Easter Monday) must not be blamed for once more quoting his favourite phrase—the pretty little phrase with which the most humorous and least exemplary of British parsons began his famous journey to France.

When they came back to the hotel to dress and dine, the Laird found he wanted a pair of white gloves for the concert—'Oon pair de gong blong,' as he called it—and they walked along the boulevards till they came to a haberdasher's shop of very good and prosperous appearance, and, going in, were received graciously by the 'patron,' a portly little bourgeois, who waved them to a tall and aristocratic and very well-dressed young commis behind the counter, saying, 'Une paire de gants blancs pour monsieur.'

And what was the suprise of our three friends in recognising Dodor!

The gay Dodor, Dodor *l'irrésistible*, quite unembarrassed by his position, was exuberant in his delight at seeing them again, and introduced them to the patron and his wife and daughter, Monsieur, Madame, and Mademoiselle Passefil. And it soon became pretty evident that, in spite of his humble employment in that house, he was a great favourite in that family, and especially with mademoiselle.

Indeed, Monsieur Passefil invited our three heroes to stay and dine then and there; but they compromised matters by asking Dodor to come and dine with *them* at the hotel, and he accepted with alacrity.

Thanks to Dodor, the dinner was a very lively one, and they soon forgot the regretful impressions of the day.

They learned that he hadn't got a penny in the world, and had left the army, and had for two years kept the books at *le père Passefil's* and served his customers, and won his good opinion and his wife's, and especially his daughter's; and that soon he was to be not only his employer's partner, but his son-in-law; and that, in spite of his impecuniosity, he had managed to impress them with the fact that in marrying a *Rigolot de Lafarçe* she was making a very splendid match indeed!

His brother-in-law, the Honourable Jack Reeve, had long cut him for a bad lot. But his sister, after a while, had made up her mind that to marry *Mlle. Passefil* wasn't the worst he could do; at all events, it would keep him out of England, and *that* was a comfort! And passing through Paris, she had actually called on the *Passefil* family, and they had fallen prostrate before such splendour; and, no wonder, for Mrs. Jack Reeve was one of the most beautiful, elegant and fashionable women in London, the smartest of the smart.

'And how about *l'Zouzou*?' asked Little Billee.

'Ah, old *Contran*! I don't see much of him. We no longer quite move in the same circles, you know; not that he's proud, or me either! but he's a sub-lieutenant in the Guides—an officer! Besides, his brother's dead, and he's the *Duc de la Rochemartel*, and a special pet of the Empress; he makes her laugh more than anybody! He's looking out for the biggest heiress he can find, and he's pretty safe to catch her, with such a name as that! In fact, they say he's caught her already—Miss *Lavinia Hunks*, of Chicago. Twenty million dollars!—at least, so the *Figaro* says!'

Then he gave them news of other old friends; and they did not part till it was time for them to go to the *Cirque des Bashibazoucks*, and after they had arranged to dine with his future family on the following day.

In the *Rue St. Honoré* was a long double file of cabs and carriages slowly moving along to the portals of that huge hall, *Le Cirque des Bashibazoucks*. Is it there still, I wonder? I don't mind betting not! Just at this period of the Second Empire there was a mania for demolition and remolition (if there is such a word), and I have no doubt my Parisian readers would search the *Rue St. Honoré* for the *Salle des Bashibazoucks* in vain!

Our friends were shown to their stalls, and looked round in surprise. This was before the days of the Albert Hall, and they had never been in such a big place of the kind before, or one so regal in aspect, so gorgeously imperial with white and gold and crimson velvet, so dazzling with light, so crammed with people from floor to roof, and cramming itself still.

A platform carpeted with crimson cloth had been erected in front of the gates where the horses had once used to come in, and their fair riders, and the two jolly English clowns; and the beautiful

nobleman with the long frock-coat and brass buttons, and soft high boots, and four-in-hand whip—*la chambrière*.

In front of this was a lower stand for the orchestra. The circus itself was filled with stalls—*stalles d'orchestre*. A pair of crimson curtains hid the entrance to the platform at the back, and by each of these stood a small page, ready to draw it aside and admit the diva.

The entrance to the orchestra was by a small door under the platform, and some thirty or forty chairs and music-stands, grouped around the conductor's *estrade*, were waiting for the band.

Little Billee looked round, and recognised many countrymen and countrywomen of his own—many great musical celebrities especially, whom he had often met in London. Tiers upon tiers of people rose up all round in a widening circle, and lost themselves in a dazy mist of light at the top—it was like a picture by Martin! In the imperial box were the English ambassador and his family, with an august British personage sitting in the middle, in front, his broad blue ribbon across his breast and his operaglass to his royal eyes.

Little Billee had never felt so excited, so exhilarated by such a show before, nor so full of eager anticipation. He looked at his programme, and saw that the Hungarian band (the first that had yet appeared in Western Europe, I believe) would play an overture of gypsy dances. Then Madame Svengali would sing 'un air connu, sans accompagnement,' and afterwards other airs, including the 'Nussbaum' of Schumann (for the first time in Paris, it seemed). Then a rest of ten minutes; then more *csárdás*; then the diva would sing 'Malbrouck s'en va-t'en guerre,' of all things in the world! and finish up with 'un impromptu de Chopin, sans paroles.'

Truly a somewhat incongruous bill of fare.

Close on the stroke of nine the musicians came in and took their seats. They were dressed in the foreign hussar uniform that has now become so familiar. The first violin had scarcely sat down before our friends recognised in him their old friend Gecko.

Just as the clock struck, Svengali, in irreproachable evening dress, tall and stout and quite splendid in appearance, notwithstanding his long black mane (which had been curled), took his place at his desk. Our friends would have known him at a glance, in spite of the wonderful alteration time and prosperity had wrought in his outward man.

He bowed right and left to the thunderous applause that greeted him, gave his three little bâton-taps, and the lovely music began at once. We have grown accustomed to strains of this kind during the last twenty years, but they were new then, and their strange seduction was as well as an enchantment.

Besides no such band as Svengali's had ever been heard; and in listening to this overture the immense crowd almost forgot that it was a mere preparation for a great musical event, and tried to encore

it. But Svengali merely turned round and bowed—there were to be no encores that night.

Then a moment of silence and breathless suspense—curiosity on tiptoe!

Then the two little page-boys each drew a silken rope, and the



"IT WAS TRILBY"

curtains parted and looped themselves up on each side symmetrically; and a tall female figure appeared, clad in what seemed like a classical dress of cloth of gold, embroidered with garnets and beetles' wings: her snowy arms and shoulders bare, a gold coronet of stars on her head, her thick light brown hair tied behind and flowing all down

her back to nearly her knees, like those ladies in hair-dressers' shops who sit with their backs to the plate-glass window to advertise the merits of some particular hair-wash.

She walked slowly down to the front, her hands hanging at her sides in quite a simple fashion, and made a slight inclination of her head and body towards the imperial box, and then to right and left. Her lips and cheeks were rouged; her dark level eye-brows nearly met at the bridge of her short high nose. Through her parted lips you could see her large glistening white teeth; her gray eyes looked straight at Svengali.

Her face was thin, and had a rather haggard expression, in spite of its artificial freshness; but its contour was divine, and its character so tender, so humble, so touchingly simple and sweet, that one melted at the sight of her. No such magnificent or seductive apparition has ever been seen before or since on any stage or platform—not even Miss Ellen Terry as the priestess of Artemis in the late laureate's play, *The Cup*.

The house rose at her as she came down to the front; and she bowed again to right and left, and put her hand to her heart quite simply and with a most winning natural gesture, an adorable *gaucherie* like a graceful and unconscious school-girl, quite innocent of stage deportment.

It was Trilby!

Trilby the tone-deaf, who couldn't sing one single note in tune! Trilby, who couldn't tell a C from an F! !

What was going to happen?

Our three friends were almost turned to stone in the immensity of their surprise.

Yet the big Taffy was trembling all over; the Laird's jaw had all but fallen on to his chest; Little Billee was staring, staring his eyes almost out of his head. There was something, to them, so strange and uncanny about it all; so oppressive, so anxious, so momentous!

The applause had at last subsided. Trilby stood with her hands behind her, one foot (the left one) on a little stool that had been left there on purpose, her lips parted, her eyes on Svengali's, ready to begin.

He gave his three beats, and the band struck a chord. Then, at another beat from him, but in her direction, she began, without the lightest appearance of effort, without any accompaniment whatever, he still beating time—conducting her, in fact, just as if she had been an orchestra herself:

'Au clair de la lune,
Mon ami Pierrot!
Prête-moi ta plume
Pour écrire un mot.
Ma chandelle est morte . . .
Je n'ai plus de feu!
Ouvre-moi ta porte
Pour l'amour de Dieu!

This was the absurd old nursery rhyme with which La Svengali, chose to make her *début* before the most critical audience in the world! She sang it three times over—the same verse. There is but one.

The first time she sang it without any expression whatever—not the slightest. Just the words and the tune; in the middle of her voice, and not loud at all; just as a child sings who is thinking of something



B

'AU CLAIR DE LA LUNE'

else; or just as a young French mother sings who is darning socks by a cradle, and rocking her baby to sleep with her foot.

But her voice was so immense in its softness, richness, freshness, that it seemed to be pouring itself out from all round; its intonation absolutely, mathematically pure; one felt it to be not only faultless, but infallible; and the seduction, the novelty of it, the strangely sympathetic quality! How can one describe the quality of a peach or a nectarine to those who have only known apples?

Until La Svengali appeared, the world had only known apples—Catalanis, Jenny Linds, Grisis, Albonis, Pattis! The best apples that can be, for sure—but still only apples!

If she had spread a pair of large white wings and gracefully fluttered up to the roof and perched upon the chandelier, she could not have produced a greater sensation. The like of that voice has never been heard, not ever will be again. A woman archangel might sing like that, or some enchanted princess out of a fairy tale.

Little Billee had already dropped his face into his hands and hid his eyes in his pocket-handkerchief; a big tear had fallen on to Taffy's left whisker; the Laird was trying hard to keep his tears back.

She sang the verse a second time, with but little added expression and no louder; but with a sort of breathy widening of her voice that made it like a broad heavenly smile of universal motherhood turned into sound. One felt all the genial gaiety and grace of impishness of Pierrot and Columbine idealised into frolicsome beauty and holy innocence, as though they were performing for the saints in Paradise—a baby Columbine, with a cherub for clown! The dream of it all came over you for a second or two—a revelation of some impossible golden age—priceless—never to be forgotten! How on earth did she do it?

Little Billee had lost all control over himself, and was shaking with his suppressed sobs—Little Billee, who hadn't shed a single tear for five long years! Half the people in the house were in tears, but tears of sheer delight, of delicate inner laughter.

Then she came back to earth, and saddened and veiled and darkened her voice as she sang the verse for the third time; and it was a great and sombre tragedy, too deep for any more tears; and somehow or other poor Columbine, forlorn and betrayed and dying, out in the cold at midnight,—sinking down to hell, perhaps—was making her last frantic appeal! It was no longer Pierrot and Columbine—it was Faust!—it was Marguerite! It was the most terrible and pathetic of all possible human tragedies, but expressed with no dramatic or histrionic exaggeration of any sort; by mere tone, slight, subtle changes in the quality of the sound—too quick and elusive to be taken count of, but to be felt with, oh, what poignant sympathy!

When the song was over, the applause did not come immediately, and she waited with her kind wide smile, as if she were well accustomed to wait like this; and then the storm began, and grew and spread and rattled and echoed—voice, hands, feet, sticks, umbrellas!—and down came the bouquets, which the little page-boys picked up; and Trilby bowed to front and right and left in her simple *débonnaire* fashion. It was her usual triumph. It had never failed, whatever the audience, whatever the country, whatever the song.

Little Billee didn't applaud. He sat with his head in his hands, his shoulders still heaving. He believed himself to be fast asleep and in a dream, and was trying his utmost not to wake; for a great happiness was his. It was one of those nights to be marked with a white stone!

As the first bars of the song came pouring out of her parted lips

(whose shape he so well remembered), and her dove-like eyes looked straight over Svengali's head, straight in his own direction—nay, at him—something melted in his brain, and all his long-lost power of loving came back with a rush.

It was like the sudden curing of a deafness that has been lasting for years. The doctor blows through your nose into your Eustachian tube with a little india-rubber machine; some obstacle gives way, there is a snap in your head, and straightway you hear better than you had ever heard in all your life, almost too well; and all your life is once more changed for you!

At length he sat up again, in the middle of La Svengali's singing of the 'Nussbaum', and saw her; and saw the Laird sitting by him, and Taffy, their eyes riveted on Trilby, and knew for certain that it was *no* dream this time, and his joy was almost a pain!

She sang the 'Nussbaum' (to its heavenly accompaniment) as simply as she had sung the previous song. Every separate note was a highly-finished gem of sound, linked to the next by a magic bond. You did not require to be a lover of music to fall beneath the spell of such a voice as that; the mere melodic phrase had all but ceased to matter. Her phrasing, consummate as it was, was as simple as a child's.

It was as if she said: 'See! what does the composer count for? Here is about as beautiful a song as was ever written, with beautiful words to match, and the words have been made French for you by one of your smartest poets! But what do the words signify, any more than the tune, or even the language? The "Nussbaum" is neither better nor worse than "Mon ami Pierrot" when I am the singer; for I am *Svengali*; and you shall hear nothing, see nothing, think of nothing, but *Svengali, Svengali, Svengali!*'

It was the apotheosis of voice and virtuosity! It was 'il bel canto' come back to earth after a hundred years—the *bel canto* of Vivarelli, let us say, who sang the same song every night to the same King of Spain for a quarter of a century, and was rewarded with a dukedom, and wealth beyond the dreams of avarice.

And, indeed, here was this immense audience, made up of the most cynically critical people in the world, and the most anti-German, assisting with rapt ears and streaming eyes at the imagined spectacle of a simple German damsel, a *Mädchen*, a *Fräulein*, just *verlobte*—a future *Hausfrau*—sitting under a walnut-tree in some suburban garden—à Berlin!—and around her, her family and her friends, probably drinking beer and smoking long porcelain pipes, and talking politics or business, and cracking innocent elaborate old German jokes; with bated breath, lest they should disturb her maiden dream of love! And all as though it were a scene in Elysium, and the *Fräulein* a nymph of many-fountained Ida, and her people Olympian gods and goddesses.

And such, indeed, they were when Trilby sang of them!

After this, when the long, frantic applause had subsided, she made

a gracious bow to the royal British operaglass (which had never left her face), and sang 'Ben Bolt' in English!

And then Little Billee remembered there was such a person as Svengali in the world, and recalled his little flexible flageolet!

'That is how I teach Gecko; that is how I teach il bel canto.... It was lost, il bel canto—and I found it in a dream—I, Sven-gali!'

And his old cosmic vision of the beauty and sadness of things, the very heart of them, and their pathetic evanescence, came back with a tenfold clearness—that heavenly glimpse beyond the veil! And with it a crushing sense of his own infinitesimal significance by the side of this glorious pair of artists, one of whom had been his friend and the other his love,—a love who had offered to be his humble mistress and slave, not feeling herself good enough to be his wife!

It made him sick and faint to remember, and filled him with hot shame, and then and there his love for Trilby became as that of a dog for its master!

She sang once more—'Chanson de Printemps', by Gounod (who was present, and seemed very hysterical), and the first part of the concert was over, and people had time to draw breath and talk over this new wonder, this revelation of what the human voice could achieve; and an immense hum filled the hall—astonishment, enthusiasm, ecstatic delight!

But our three friends found little to say—for what *they* felt there were as yet no words!

Taffy and the Laird looked at Little Billee, who seemed to be looking inward at some transcendent dream of his own; with red eyes, and his face all pale and drawn, and his nose very pink, and rather thicker than usual; and the dream appeared to be out of the common blissful, though his eyes were swimming still, for his smile was almost idiotic in its rapture!

The second part of the concert was still shorter than the first, and created, if possible, a wilder enthusiasm.

Trilby only sang twice.

Her first song was 'Malbrouck s'en va-t'en guerre.'

She began it quite lightly and merrily, like a jolly march; in the middle of her voice, which had not as yet revealed any exceptional compass or range. People laughed quite frankly at the first verse:—

'Malbrouck s'en va-t'en guerre—
Mironton, mironton, mirontaine!
 Malbrouck s'en va-t'en guerre. . . .
 Ne sais quand reviendra!
 Ne sais quand reviendra!
 Ne sais quand reviendra!'

The *mironton, mirontaine* was the very essence of high martial resolve and heroic self-confidence; one would have led a forlorn hope after hearing it once!

'Il reviendra-z à Pâques—
Mironton, mironton, mirontaine !
 Il reviendra-z à Pâques. . . .
 Ou . . . à la Trinité !'

People still laughed, though the *mironton, mirontaine* betrayed an uncomfortable sense of the dawning of doubts and fears—vague forebodings!

'La Trinité se passe—
Mironton, mironton, mirontaine !
 La Trinité se passe. . . .
 Malbrouck ne revient pas !'

And here, especially in the *mironton, mirontaine*, a note of anxiety revealed itself—so poignant, so acutely natural and human, that it became a personal anxiety of one's own, causing the heart to beat, and one's breath was short.

'Madame à sa tour monte—
Mironton, mironton, mirontaine !
 Madame à sa tour monte,
 Si haut qu'elle peut monter !'

Oh! How one's heart went with her! Anne! Sister Anne! Do you see anything?

'Elle voit de loin son page—
Mironton, mironton, mirontaine !
 Elle voit de loin son page,
 Tout de noir habillé !'

One is almost sick with the sense of impending calamity—it is a'l but unbearable!

'Mon page—mon beau page!—
Mironton, mironton, mirontaine !
 Mon page—mon beau page!
 Quelle nouvelles apportez ?'

And here Little Billee begins to weep again, and so does everybody else! The *mironton, mirontaine*, is an agonised wail of suspense—poor bereaved duchess!—poor Sarah Jennings! Did it all announce itself to you just like that?

All this while the accompaniment had been quite simple—just a few obvious ordinary chords.

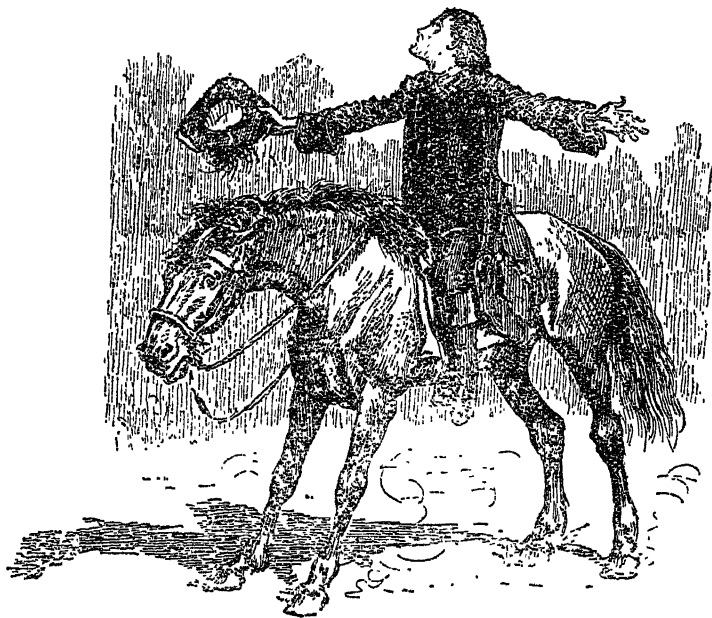
But now, quite suddenly, without a single modulation or note of warning, down goes the tune a full major third' from E to C—into the graver depths of Trilby's great contralto—so solemn and ominous that there is no more weeping, but the flesh creeps; the accompaniment slows and elaborates itself; the march becomes a funeral march, with muted strings, and quite slowly:

'Aux nouvelles que j'apporte—
Mironton, mironton, mirontaine !
 Aux nouvelles que j'apporte,
 Vos beaux yeux vont pleurer !'

Richer and richer grows the accompaniment. The *mironton*, *mirontaine*, becomes a dirge!

'Quittez vos habits roses—
Mironton, mironton, mirontaine,
 Quittez vos habits roses,
 Et vos satins brochés!'

Here the ding-donging of a big bell seems to mingle with the score; . . . and very slowly, and so impressively that the news will ring for



'AUX NOUVELLES QUE J'APPORTE,
 VOS BEAUX YEUX VONT PLEURER!'

ever in the ears and hearts of those who hear it from La Svengali's lips:

'Le Sieur Malbrouck est mort—
Mironton, mironton, mirontaine!
 Le Sieur—Malbrouck—est mort!
 Est mort—et enterré!'

And thus it ends quite abruptly!
 And this heartrending tragedy, this great historical epic in two dozen lines, at which some five or six thousand gay French people are sniffing and mopping their eyes like so many Niobes, is just a common old French comic song—a mere nursery ditty, like 'Little Bo-peep'— to the tune,

'We won't go home till the morning,
 Till daylight doth appear.'

And after a second or two of silence (oppressive and impressive as that which occurs at a burial when the handful of earth is being dropped on the coffin lid) the audience bursts once more into madness; and La Svengali, who accepts no encores, has to bow for nearly five minutes, standing amid a sea of flowers....

Then comes her great and final performance. The orchestra swiftly plays the first four bars of the bass in Chopin's Impromptu (A flat); and suddenly, without words, as a light nymph catching the whirl of a double skipping-rope, La Svengali breaks in, and vocalises that astounding piece of music that so few pianists can even play; but no pianist has ever played it like this; no piano has ever given out such notes as these!

Every single phrase is a string of perfect gems, of purest ray serene, strung together on a loose golden thread! The higher and shriller she sings, the sweeter it is; higher and shriller than any woman had ever sung before.

Waves of sweet and tender laughter, the very heart and essence of innocent, high-spirited girlhood, alive to all that is simple and joyous and elementary in nature—the freshness of the morning, the ripple of the stream, the click of the mill, the lisp of the wind in the trees, the song of the lark in the cloudless sky—the sun and the dew, the scent of early flowers and summer woods and meadows—the sight of birds and bees and butterflies and frolicsome young animals at play—all the sights and scents and sounds that are the birthright of happy children, happy savages in favoured climes—things within the remembrance and the reach of most of us! All this, the memory and the feel of it, are in Trilby's voice as she warbles that long, smooth, lilting, dancing laugh, that shower of linked sweetness, that wondrous song without words; and those who hear feel it all, and remember it with her. It is irresistible! it forces itself on you; no words, no pictures, could ever do the like! So that the tears that are shed out of all these many French eyes are tears of pure, unmixed delight in happy reminiscence! (Chopin, it is true, may have meant something quite different—a hot-house, perhaps, with orchids and arum lilies and tuberose and hydrangeas—but all this is neither here nor there, as the Laird would say in French.)

Then comes the slow movement, the sudden adagio, with its capricious ornaments—the waking of the virgin heart, the stirring of the sap, the dawn of love; its doubts and fears and questionings; and the mellow, powerful, deep chest notes are like the pealing of great golden bells, with a light little pearl shower tinkling round—drops from the upper fringe of her grand voice as she shakes it..

Then back again the quick part, childhood once more, *da capo*, only quicker! hurry, hurry! but distinct as ever. Loud and shrill and sweet beyond compare—drowning the orchestra; of a piercing quality quite ineffable; a joy there is no telling; a clear, purling, crystal stream that gurgles and foams and bubbles along over sunlit tones; a wonder, a world's delight!

And there is not a sign of effort, of difficulty overcome. All through, Trilby smiles her broad, angelic smile; her lips well parted, her big white teeth glistening as she gently jerks her head from side to side in time to Svengali's bâton, as if to shake the willing notes out quicker and higher and shriller....

And in a minute or two it is all over, like the lovely bouquet of fireworks at the end of the show, and she lets what remains of it die out and away like the afterglow of fading Bengal fires—her voice receding into the distance—coming back to you like an echo from all round, from anywhere you please—quite soft—hardly more than



UN IMPROMPTU DE CHOPIN

a breath; but *such* a breath! Then one last chromatically ascending rocket, *pianissimo*, up to E in alt, and then darkness and silence!

And after a little pause the many-headed rises as one, and waves its hats and sticks and handkerchiefs, and stamps and shouts.... 'Vive La Svengali! Vive La Svengali!'

Svengali steps on to the platform by his wife's side and kisses her hand; and they both bow themselves backward through the curtains, which fall, to rise again and again and again on this astounding pair!

Such was La Svengali's *début* in Paris.

It had lasted little over an hour, one quarter of which, at least, had been spent in plaudits and courtesies!

The writer is no musician, alas! (as, no doubt, his musical readers have found out by this) save in his thralldom to music of not too severe a kind, and laments the clumsiness and inadequacy of this wild (though somewhat ambitious) attempt to recall an impression received

more than thirty years ago; to revive the ever-blessed memory of that unforgettable first night at the Cirque des Bashibazoucks.

Would that I could transcribe here Berlioz's famous series of twelve articles, entitled 'La Svengali', which were republished from *La Lyre Éolienne*, and are now out of print!

Or Théophile Gautier's elaborate rhapsody, 'Madame Svengali—*Ange ou Femme?*' in which he proves that one need not have a musical ear (he hadn't) to be enslaved by such a voice as hers, any more than the eye of beauty (this he *had*) to fall the victim of 'her celestial form and face'. It is enough, he says, to be simply human! I forget in which journal this eloquent tribute appeared; it is not to be found in his collected works.

Or the intemperate diatribe by Herr Blagner (as I will christen him) on the tyranny of the prima donna called 'Svengalismus'; in which he attempts to show that mere virtuosity carried to such a pitch is mere viciousity—base acrobaticism of the vocal chords, a hysteric appeal to morbid Gallic 'sentimentalismus'; and that this monstrous development of a phenomenal larynx, this degrading cultivation and practice of the abnormalismus of a mere physical peculiarity, are death and destruction to all true music; since they place Mozart and Beethoven, and even *himself*, on a level with Bellini, Donizetti, Offenbach—any Italian tune-tinkler, any ballad-monger of the hated Paris pavement! and can make the highest music of all (even *his own*) go down with the common French herd at the very first hearing, just as if it were some idiotic refrain of the *café chantant*!

So much for Blagnerismus *v.* Svengalismus.

But I fear there is no space within the limits of this humble tale for these masterpieces of technical musical criticism.

Besides, there are other reasons.

Our three heroes walked back to the boulevards, the only silent ones amid the throng that poured through the Rue St. Honoré, as the Cirque des Bashibazoucks emptied itself of its over-excited audience.

They went arm-in-arm, as usual; but this time Little Billee was in the middle. He wished to feel on each side of him the warm and genial contact of his two beloved old friends. It seemed as if they had suddenly been restored to him, after five long years of separation; his heart was overflowing with affection for them, too full to speak just yet! Overflowing, indeed, with the love of love, the love of life, the love of death—the love of all that is, and ever will be! just as in his old way.

He could have hugged them both in the open street, before the whole world; and the delight of it was that this was no dream; about that there was no mistake. He was himself again at last, after five years, and wide awake; and he owed it all to Trilby!

And what did he feel for Trilby? He couldn't tell yet. It was

too vast as yet to be measured; and, alas! it was weighted with such a burden of sorrow and regret that he might well put off the thought of it a little while longer, and gather in what bliss he might: like the man whose hearing has been restored after long years, he would revel in the mere physical delight of hearing for a space, and not go out of his way as yet to listen for the bad news that was already in the air, and would come to roost quite soon enough.

Taffy and the Laird were silent also; Trilby's voice was still in their ears and hearts, her image in their eyes, and utter bewilderment still oppressed them and kept them dumb.

It was a warm and balmy night, almost like midsummer; and they stopped at the first café they met on the Boulevard de la Madeleine (*comme autrefois*), and ordered bocks of beer, and sat at a little table on the pavement, the only one unoccupied; for the café was already crowded, the hum of lively talk was great, and 'La Svengali' was in every mouth.

The Laird was the first to speak. He emptied his bock at a draught, and called for another, and lit a cigar, and said, 'I don't believe it was Trilby, after all!' It was the first time her name had been mentioned between them that evening—and for five years!

'Good heavens!' said Taffy. 'Can you doubt it?'

'Oh yes! that was Trilby,' said Little Billee.

Then the Laird proceeded to explain that, putting aside the impossibility of Trilby's ever being taught to sing in tune, and her well-remembered loathing for Svengali, he had narrowly scanned her face through his opera-glass, and found that in spite of a likeness quite marvellous there were well-marked differences. Her face was narrower and longer, her eyes larger, and their expression not the same; then she seemed taller and stouter, and her shoulders broader and more drooping and so forth.

But the others wouldn't hear of it, and voted him cracked, and declared they even recognised the peculiar twang of her old speaking voice in the voice she now sang with, especially when she sang low down. And they all three fell to discussing the wonders of her performance like everybody else all round; Little Billee leading, with an eloquence and a seeming of technical musical knowledge that quite impressed them, and made them feel happy and at ease; for they were anxious for his sake about the effect this sudden and so unexpected sight of her would have upon him after all that had passed.

He seemed transcendently happy and elate—incomprehensibly so, in fact—and looked at them both with quite a new light in his eyes, as if all the music he had heard had trebled not only his joy in being alive, but his pleasure at being with them. Evidently he had quite outgrown his old passion for her, and that was a comfort indeed!

But Little Billee knew better.

He knew that his old passion for her had all come back, and was so overwhelming and immense that he could not feel it just yet, nor yet the hideous pangs of a jealousy so consuming that it would

burn up his life. He gave himself another twenty-four hours.

But he had not to wait so long. He woke up after a short, uneasy sleep that very night, to find that the flood was over him; and he realised how hopelessly, desperately, wickedly, insanely he loved this woman, who might have been his, but was now the wife of another man; a greater than he, and one to whom she owed it that she was more glorious than any other woman on earth—a queen among queens—a goddess! for what was any earthly throne compared to that she established in the hearts and souls of all who came within the sight and hearing of her; beautiful as she was besides—beautiful, beautiful! And what must be her love for the man who had taught her and trained her, and revealed her towering genius to herself and to the



'AND THE REMEMBRANCE OF THEM—HAND IN HAND'

world!—a man resplendent also, handsome and tall and commanding—a great artist from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot!

And the remembrance of them—hand in hand, master and pupil, husband and wife—smiling and bowing in the face of all that splendid tumult they had called forth and could not quell, stung and tortured and maddened him so that he could not lie still, but got up and raged and rampaged up and down his hot, narrow, stuffy bedroom, and longed for his old familiar brain-disease to come back and narcotise his trouble, and be his friend, and stay with him till he died!

Where was he to fly for relief from such new memories as these, which would never cease; and the old memories, and all the glamour

and grace of them that had been so suddenly called out of the grave? And how could he escape, now that he felt the sight of her face and the sound of her voice would be a craving—a daily want—like that of some poor starving outcast for warmth and meat and drink?

And little innocent, pathetic, ineffable, well-remembered sweetnesses of her changing face kept painting themselves on his retina; and incomparable tones of this new thing, her voice, her infinite voice, went ringing in his head, till he all but shrieked aloud in his agony.

And then the poisoned and delirious sweetness of those mad kisses,

‘by hopeless fancy feigned
On lips that are for others’!

And then the grewsome physical jealousy, that miserable inheritance of all artistic sons of Adam, that plague and torment of the dramatic, plastic imagination, which can idealise so well, and yet realise, alas! so keenly. After three or four hours spent like this, he could stand it no longer; madness was lying in his way. So he hurried on a garment, and went and knocked at Taffy’s door.

‘Good God! what’s the matter with you?’ exclaimed the good Taffy, as Little Billee tumbled into his room, calling out:

‘Oh, Taffy, Taffy, I’ve g-g-gone mad, I think!’ And then, shivering all over, and stammering incoherently, he tried to tell his friend what was the matter with him, with great simplicity.

Taffy, in much alarm, slipped on his trousers and made Little Billee get into his bed, and sat by his side holding his hand. He was greatly perplexed, fearing the recurrence of another attack like that of five years back. He didn’t dare leave him for an instant to wake the Laird and send for a doctor.

Suddenly Little Billee buried his face in the pillow and began to sob, and some instinct told Taffy this was the best thing that could happen. The boy had always been a highly-strung, emotional, over-excitable, over-sensitive, and quite uncontrolled mammy’s-darling, a cry-baby sort of chap, who had never been to school. It was all a part of his genius, and also a part of his charm. It would do him good once more to have a good blub after five years! After a while Little Billee grew quieter, and then suddenly he said: ‘What a miserable ass you must think me, what an unmanly duffer!’

‘Why, my friend?’

‘Why, for going on in this idiotic way. I really couldn’t help it. I went mad, I tell you. I’ve been walking up and down my room all night, till everything seemed to go round.’

‘So have I.’

‘You? What for?’

‘The very same reason.’

‘What!’

‘It was just as fond of Trilby as you were. Only she happened to prefer *you*.’

'What!' cried Little Billee again. 'You were fond of Trilby?'
 'I believe you, my boy!'
 'In love with her?'
 'I believe you, my boy!'
 'She never knew it, then!'
 'Oh yes, she did.'
 'She never told me, then!'
 'Didn't she? That's like her. I told *her*, at all events. I asked her to marry me.'
 'Well—I *am* damned! When?'
 'That day we took her to Meudon, with Jeannot, and dined at



'“I BELIEVE YOU, MY BOY!”'

the garde champêtre's, and she danced the cancan with Sandy.'
 'Well—I *am*—— And she *refused* you?'
 'Apparently so'.
 'Well, I—— Why on earth did she refuse you?'
 'Oh, I suppose she'd already begun to fancy *you*, my friend. *Il y en a toujours un autre!*'
 'Fancy me—prefer me—to you?'
 'Well, yes. It *does* seem odd—eh, old fellow? But there's no accounting for tastes, you know. She's built on such an ample scale herself, I suppose, that she likes little 'uns—contrast, you see. She's very maternal, I think. Besides, you're a smart little chap; and you ain't half bad; and you've got brains and talent, and lots of cheek, and all that. I'm rather a ponderous kind of party.'

'Well—I *am* damned!'

'*C'est comme ça!* I took it lying down you see.'

'Does the Laird know?'

'No; and I don't want him to—nor anybody else'.

'Taffy, what a regular downright old trump you are!'

'Glad you think so; anyhow, we're both in the same boat, and we've got to make the best of it. She's another man's wife, and probably she's very fond of him. I'm sure she ought to be, cad as he is, after all he's done for her. So there's an end of it.'

'Ah! there'll never be an end of it for *me*—never—never—oh, never, my God! She would have married me but for my mother's meddling, and that stupid old ass, my uncle. What a wife! Think of all she must have in her heart and brain, only to *sing* like that! And, O Lord! how beautiful she is—a goddess! Oh, the brow and cheek and chin, and the way her head's put on! did you *ever* see anything like it? Oh, if only I hadn't written and told my mother I was going to marry her! why, we should have been man and wife for five years by this time—living at Barbizon—painting away like mad! Oh, what a heavenly life! Oh, curse all officious meddling with other people's affairs! Oh! oh!'

'There you go again! What's the good? And where do *I* come in, my friend? *I* should have been no better off, old fellow—worse than ever, I think.'

Then there was a long silence.

At length Little Billee said:

'Taffy, I can't tell you what a trump you are. All I've ever thought of you—and God knows that's enough—will be nothing to what I shall always think of you after this.'

'All right, old chap!'

'And now I think *I'm* all right again, for a time—and I shall cut back to bed. Good night! Thanks more than I can ever express!' And Little Billee, restored to his balance, cut back to his own bed just as the day was breaking.

PART SEVENTH

'The moon made thy lips pale, beloved,
The wind made thy bosom chill;
The night did shed
On thy dear head
Its frozen dew, and thou didst lie
Where the bitter breath of the naked sky
Might visit thee at will.'

NEXT morning our three friends lay late abed, and breakfasted in their rooms.

They had all three passed 'white nights'—even the Laird, who had tossed about and pressed a sleepless pillow till dawn, so excited had he been by the wonder of Trilby's reincarnation, so perplexed by his own doubts as to whether it was really Trilby or not.

And certain haunting tones of her voice, that voice so cruelly sweet (which clove the stillness with a clang so utterly new, so strangely heart-piercing and seductive, that the desire to hear it once more became nostalgic—almost an ache!), certain bits and bars and phrases of the music she had sung, unspeakable felicities and facilities of execution; sudden exotic warmths, fragrances, tender-nesses, graces, depths, and breadths; quick changes from grave to gay, from rough to smooth, from great metallic brazen clangours to soft golden suavities; all the varied modes of sound we try so vainly to borrow from vocal nature by means of wind and reed and string—all this new 'Trilbyness' kept echoing in his brain all night (for he was of a nature deeply musical), and sleep had been impossible to him.

'As when we dwell upon a word we know,
Repeating, till the word we know so well
Becomes a wonder, and we know not why,'

so dwelt the Laird upon the poor old tune 'Ben Bolt', which kept singing itself over and over again in his tired consciousness, and maddened him with novel, strange, unhackneyed, unsuspected beauties such as he had never dreamed of in any earthly music.

It had become a wonder, and he knew not why!

They spent what was left of the morning at the Louvre, and tried to interest themselves in the 'Marriage of Cana,' and the 'Woman at the Well,' and Vandyck's man with the glove, and the little Princess of Velasquez, and Lisa Gioconda's smile: it was of no use trying. There was no sight worth looking at in all Paris but Trilby in her golden raiment; no other princess in the world; no smile but hers, when through her parted lips came bubbling Chopin's Impromptu. They had not long to stay in Paris, and they must drink of that bubbling fountain once more—*coûte que coûte!* They went to the Salle des Bashibazoucks, and found that all seats all

over the house had been taken for days and weeks; and the 'queue' at the door had already begun! and they had to give up all hopes of slaking this particular thirst.

Then they went and lunched perfunctorily, and talked desultorily over lunch, and read criticisms of La Svengali's *début* in the morning papers—a chorus of journalistic acclamation gone mad, a frenzied eulogy in every key—but nothing was good enough for them! Brand-new words were wanted—another language!

Then they wanted a long walk, and could think of nowhere to go in all Paris—that immense Paris, where they had promised themselves to see so much that the week they were to spend there had seemed too short!

Looking in a paper, they saw it announced that the band of the Imperial Guides would play that afternoon in the Pré Catelan, Bois de Boulogne, and thought they might as well walk there as anywhere else, and walk back again in time to dine with the Passefils—a prandial function which did not promise to be very amusing; but still it was something to kill the evening with, since they couldn't go and hear Trilby again.

Outside the Pré Catelan they found a crowd of cabs and carriages, saddle-horses and grooms. One might have thought one's self in the height of the Paris season. They went in, and strolled about here and there, and listened to the band, which was famous (it has performed in London at the Crystal Palace), and they looked about and studied life, or tried to.

Suddenly they saw, sitting with three ladies (one of whom, the eldest, was in black), a very smart young officer, a Guide, all red and green and gold, and recognised their old friend Zouzou. They bowed, and he knew them at once, and jumped up and came to them and greeted them warmly, especially his old friend Taffy, whom he took to his mother—the lady in black—and introduced to the other ladies, the younger of whom (strangely unlike the rest of her countrywomen) was so lamentably, so pathetically plain that it would be brutal to attempt the cheap and easy task of describing her. It was Miss Lavinia Hunks, the famous American millionairess, and her mother. Then the good Zouzou came back and talked to the Laird and Little Billee.

Zouzou, in some subtle and indecribable way, had become very ducal indeed.

He looked extremely distinguished, for one thing, in his beautiful Guides' uniform, and was most gracefully and winningly polite. He inquired warmly after Mrs. and Miss Bagot, and begged Little Billee would recall him to their amiable remembrance when he saw them again. He expressed most sympathetically his delight to see Little Billee looking so strong and so well (Little Billee looked like a pallid little washed-out ghost, after his white night).

They talked of Dodor. He said how attached he was to Dodor, and always should be; but Dodor, it seemed, had made a great

mistake in leaving the army and going into a retail business (*petit commerce*). He had done for himself—*dégringolé*! He should have stuck to the *dragons*—with a little patience and good conduct he would have ‘won his epaulet’—and then one might have arranged for him a good little marriage—*un parti convenable*—for he was ‘très joli garçon, Dodor! bonne tournure—et très gentiment né! C’est très ancien, les Rigolot—dans le Poitou, je crois—Lafarce, et tout ça; tout à fait bien!’

It was difficult to realise that this polished and discreet and somewhat patronising young man of the world was the jolly dog who had gone after Little Billee’s hat on all fours in the Rue Vieille des Trois Mauvais Ladres and brought it back in his mouth—the Carylathide!

Little Billee little knew that Monsieur le Duc de la Rochemartel-Boissegur had quite recently delighted a very small and select and most august imperial supper-party at Compiègne with this very story, not blinking a single detail of his own share in it—and had given a most touching and sympathetic description of ‘le joli petit peintre anglais qui s’appelait Litrebili, et ne pouvait pas se tenir sur ses jambes—et qui pleurait d’amour fraternel dans les bras de mon copain Dodor!’

‘Ah! Monsieur Gontran, ce que je donnerais pour avoir vu ça!’ had said the greatest lady in France; ‘un de mes zouaves—à quatre pattes—dans la rue—un chapeau dans la bouche—oh—c’est impayable!’

Zouzou kept these blackguard bohemian reminiscences for the imperial circle alone—to which it was suspected that he was secretly rallying himself. Among all outsiders—especially within the narrow precincts of the cream of the noble Faubourg (which remained aloof from the Tuileries)—he was a very proper and gentlemanlike person indeed, as his brother had been—and, in his mother’s fond belief, ‘très bien pensant, très bien vu, à Frohsdorf et à Rome.’

On lui aurait donné le bon Dieu sans confession—as Madame Vinard had said of Little Billee—they would have shriven him at sight, and admitted him to the holy communion on trust!

He did not present Little Billee and the Laird to his mother, nor to Mrs. and Miss Hunks; that honour was reserved for ‘the Man of Blood’ alone; nor did he ask where they were staying, nor invite them to call on him. But in parting he expressed the immense pleasure it had given him to meet them again, and the hope he had of some day shaking their hands in London.

As the friends walked back to Paris together, it transpired that ‘the Man of Blood’ had been invited by Madame Duchesse Mère (Maman Duchesse, as Zouzou called her) to dine with her next day, and meet the Hunkses at a furnished apartment she had taken in the Place Vendôme; for they had let (to the Hunkses) the Hôtel de la Rochemartel in the Rue de Lille; they had also been obliged to let their place in the country, le château de Boisségur (to Monsieur

Despoires, or 'des Poires,' as he chose to spell himself on his visiting cards—the famous soap manufacturer—'Un très brave homme, à ce qu'on dit!' and whose only son, by the way, soon after married Mademoiselle Jeanne-Adélaïde d'Amaury-Brissac de Roncesvaux de Boisségur de la Rochemartel).

'Il ne fait pas gras chez nous à présent—je vous assure!' Madame Duchesse Mère had pathetically said to Taffy—but had given him to understand that things would be very much better for her son in the event of his marriage with Miss Hunks.

'Good heavens!' said Little Billee, on hearing this; 'that grotesque little bogy in blue? Why, she's deformed—she squints—she's a dwarf, and looks like an idiot! Millions or no millions, the man who marries her is a felon! As long as there are stones to break and a road to break them on, able-bodied man who marries a woman like that for anything but pity and kindness—and even then—dishonours himself, insults his ancestry, and inflicts on his descendants a wrong that nothing will ever redeem—he nips them in the bud—he blasts them for ever! He ought to be cut by his fellow-men—sent to Coventry—to jail—to penal servitude for life! He ought to have a separate hell to himself when he dies—he ought to—'

'Shut up, you little blaspheming ruffian!' said the Laird. 'Where do you expect to go to, yourself, with such frightful sentiments? And what would become of your beautiful old twelfth-century dukedoms, with a hundred yards of back frontage opposite the Louvre, on a beautiful historic river, and a dozen beautiful historic names, and no money—if you had your way?' and the Laird wunk his historic wink.

'Twelfth-century dukedoms be damned!' said Taffy, *au grand sérieux*, as usual. 'Little Billee's quite right, and Zouzou makes me sick! Bedides, what does she marry *him* for—not for his beauty either, I guess! She's his fellow-criminal, his deliberate accomplice, *particeps delicti*, accessory before the act and after! She has no right to marry at all! tar and feathers and a rail for both of them—and for Maman Duchesse too—and I suppose that's why I refused her invitation to dinner! and now let's go and dine with Dodor—.... anyhow Dodor's young woman doesn't marry him for a dukedom—or even his 'de'—*mais bien pour ses beaux yeux!* and if the Rigolots of the future turn out less nice to look at than their sire, and not quite so amusing, they will probably be a great improvement on him in many other ways. There's room enough—and to spare!'

'Ear! 'ear!' said Little Billee (who always grew flippant when Taffy got on his high horse). 'Your 'ealth and song, sir—their's my sentiments to a T! What shall we 'ave the pleasure of drinkin', after that very nice 'armony?'

After which they walked on in silence, each, no doubt, musing on the general contrariness of things, and imagining what splendid

little Wynnes, or Bagots, or M'Allisters might have been ushered into a decadent world for its regeneration if fate had so willed it that a certain magnificent and singularly gifted grisette, etc. etc. etc.

Mrs. and Miss Hunks passed them as they walked along, in a beautiful blue barouche with C-springs—*un 'huit-ressorts'*; Maman Duchesse passed them in a hired fly; Zouzou passed them on horse-back; 'tout Paris' passed them; but they were none the wiser, and agreed that the show was not a patch on that in Hyde Park during the London season.

When they reached the Place de la Concorde it was that lovely hour of a fine autumn day in beautiful bright cities when all the lamps are lit in the shops and streets and under the trees, and it is still daylight—a quickly fleeting joy; and as a special treat on this particular occasion the sun set, and up rose the yellow moon over eastern Paris, and floated above the chimney-pots of the Tuileries.

They stopped to gaze at the homeward procession of cabs and carriages, as they used to do in the old times. Tout Paris was still passing; tout Paris is very long.

They stood among a little crowd of sightseers like themselves, Little Billee right in front—in the road.

Presently a magnificent open carriage came by—more magnificent than even the Hunkses', with liveries and harness quite vulgarly resplendent—almost Napoleonic.

Lolling back in it lay Monsieur et Madame Svengali—he with his broad-brimmed felt sombrero over his long black curls, wrapped in costly furs, smoking his big cigar of the Havana.

By his side La Svengali—also in sables—with a large black velvet hat on, her light brown hair done up in a huge knot on the nape of her neck. She was rouged and pearl-powdered, and her eyes were blackened beneath, and thus made to look twice their size; but in spite of all such disfigurements she was a most splendid vision, and caused quite a little sensation in the crowd as she came slowly by.

Little Billee's heart was in his mouth. He caught Svengali's eye, and saw him speak to her. She turned her head and looked at him standing there—they both did. Little Billee bowed. She stared at him with a cold stare of disdain, and cut him dead—so did Svengali. And as they passed he heard them both snigger—she with a little high-pitched flippant snigger worthy of a London barmaid.

Little Billee was utterly crushed, and everything seemed turning round.

The Laird and Taffy had seen it all without losing a detail. The Svengalis had not even looked their way. The Laird said:

'It's not Trilby—I swear! She could *never* have done that—it's not *in* her! and it's another face altogether—I'm sure of it!'

Taffy was also staggered and in doubt. They caught hold of Little Billee, each by an arm, and walked him off to the boulevards. He was quite demoralised, and wanted not to dine at Passefil's. He wanted to go straight home at once. He longed for his mother as he used to long for her when he was in trouble as a small boy and she was away from home—longed for her desperately—to hug her and hold her and fondle her, and be fondled, for his own sake and hers; all his old love for her had come back in full—with what arrears! all his old love for his sister, for his old home.

When they went back to the hotel to dress (for Dodor had begged them to put on their best evening war-paint, so as to impress his future mother-in-law), Little Billee became fractious and intractable. And it was only on Taffy's promising that he would go all the way to Devonshire with him on the morrow, and stay with him there, that he could be got to dress and dine.

The huge Taffy lived entirely by his affections, and he hadn't many to live by—the Laird, Trilby, and Little Billee.

Trilby was unattainable, the Laird was quite strong and independent enough to get on by himself, and Taffy had concentrated all his faculties of protection and affection on Little Billee, and was equal to any burden or responsibility all this instinctive young fathering might involve.

In the first place, Little Billee had always been able to do quite easily, and better than any one else in the world, the very things Taffy most longed to do himself and couldn't, and this inspired the good Taffy with a chronic reverence and wonder he could not have expressed in words.

Then Little Billee was physically small and weak, and incapable of self-control. Then he was generous, amiable, affectionate, transparent as crystal, without an atom of either egotism or conceit; and had a gift of amusing you and interesting you by his talk (and its complete sincerity) that never palled; and even his silence was charming—one felt so sure of him—so there was hardly any sacrifice, little or big, that big Taffy was not ready and glad to make for Little Billee. On the other hand, there lay deep down under Taffy's surface irascibility and earnestness about trifles (and beneath his harmless vanity of the strong man), a long-suffering patience, a real humility, a robustness of judgment, a sincerity and all-roundness, a completeness of sympathy, that made him very good to trust and safe to lean upon. Then his powerful, impressive aspect, his great stature, the gladiator-like poise of his small round head on his big neck and shoulders, his huge deltoids and deep chest and slender loins, his clean-cut ankles and wrists, all the long and bold and highly-finished athletic shapes of him, that easy grace of strength that made all his movements a pleasure to watch, and any garment look well when he wore it—all this was a perpetual feast to the quick, prehensile, aesthetic eye. And then he had such a solemn, earnest, lovable way of bending poker round his neck, and breaking them

on his arm, and jumping his own height (or near it), and lifting up arm-chairs by one leg with one hand, and what not else!

So that there was hardly any sacrifice, little or big, that Little Billee would not accept from big Taffy as a mere matter of course—a fitting and proper tribute rendered by bodily strength to genius.

Par nobile fratrum—well met and well mated for fast and long-enduring friendship.

The family banquet at Monsieur Passefil's would have been dull but for the irrepressible Dodor, and still more for the Laird of Cockpen, who rose to the occasion, and surpassed himself in geniality, drollery, and eccentricity of French grammar and accent. Monsieur Passefil was also a droll in his way, and had the quickly familiar, jocose facetiousness that seems to belong to the successful, middle-aged bourgeois all over the world, when he's not pompous instead (he can even be both sometimes).

Madame Passefil was not jocose. She was much impressed by the aristocratic splendour of Taffy, the romantic melancholy and refinement of Little Billee, and their quiet and dignified politeness. She always spoke of Dodor as Monsieur de Lafarce, though the rest of the family (and one or two friends who had been invited) always called him Monsieur Théodore, and he was officially known as Monsieur Rigolot.

Whenever Madame Passefil addressed him or spoke of him in this aristocratic manner (which happened very often), Dodor would wink at his friends, with his tongue in his cheek. It seemed to amuse him beyond measure.

Mademoiselle Ernestine was evidently too much in love to say anything, and seldom took her eyes off Monsieur Théodore, whom she had never seen in evening dress before. It must be owned that he looked very nice—more ducal than even Zouzou—and to be Madame de Lafarce *en perspective*, and the future owner of such a brilliant husband as Dodor, was enough to turn a stronger little bourgeois head than Mademoiselle Ernestine's.

She was not beautiful, but healthy, well grown, well brought up, and ~~presumably~~ of a sweet, kind, and amiable disposition—an *ingénue* fresh from her convent—innocent as a child, no doubt; and it was felt that Dodor had done better for himself (and for his race) than Monsieur le Duc. Little Dodors need have no fear.

After dinner the ladies and gentlemen left the dining-room together, and sat in a pretty salon overlooking the boulevard, where cigarettes were allowed, and there was music. Mademoiselle Ernestine laboriously played 'Les Cloches du Monastère' (by Monsieur Lefébure-Wély, if I'm not mistaken). It's the most bourgeois piece of music I know.

Then Dodor, with his sweet high voice, so strangely pathetic and true, sang goody-goody little French songs of innocence (of

which he seemed to have an endless *répertoire*) to his future wife's conscientious accompaniment—to the immense delight, also, of all his future family, who were almost in tears—and to the great amusement of the Laird, at whom he winked in the most pathetic parts, putting his forefinger to the side of his nose, like Noah Claypole in *Oliver Twist*.

The wonder of the hour, La Svengali, was discussed, of course; it was unavoidable. But our friends did not think it necessary to reveal that she was 'la grande Trilby.' That would soon transpire by itself.

And, indeed, before the month was a week older the papers were full of nothing else.

Madame Svengali—'la grande Trilby,'—was the only daughter of the honourable and reverend Sir Lord O'Ferrall.

She had run away from the primeval forests and lonely marshes of le Dublin, to lead a free-and-easy life among the artists of the Quartier Latin of Paris—*une vie de bohème*!

She was the Venus Anadyomene from top to toe.

She was *blanche comme neige, avec un volcan dans le coeur*.

Casts of her alabaster feet could be had at Brucciani's, in the Rue de la Souricière St. Denis. (He made a fortune.)

Monsieur Ingres had painted her left foot on the wall of a studio in the Place St. Anatole des Arts; and an eccentric Scotch milord (le Comte de Pencock) had bought the house containing the flat containing the studio containing the wall on which it was painted, had had the house pulled down, and the wall framed and glazed and sent to his castle of Edimbourg.

(This, unfortunately, was in excess of the truth. It was found impossible to execute the Laird's wish, on account of the material the wall was made of. So the Lord Count of Pencock—such was Madame Vinard's version of Sandy's nickname—had to forego his purchase.)

Next morning our friends were in readiness to leave Paris; even the Laird had had enough of it, and longed to get back to his work again—a 'Hari-Kari in Yokohama.' (He had never been to Japan; but no more had any one else in those early days.)

They had just finished breakfast, and were sitting in the courtyard of the hotel, which was crowded, as usual.

Little Billee went into the hotel post-office to despatch a note to his mother. Sitting sideways there at a small table and reading letters was Svengali—of all people in the world. But for these two and a couple of clerks the room was empty.

Svengali looked up; they were quite close together.

Little Billee, in his nervousness, began to shake, and half put out his hand, and drew it back again, seeing the look of hate on Svengali's face.

Svengali jumped up, put his letters together, and passing by

Little Billee on his way to the door, called him 'verfluchter Schweinhund,' and deliberately spat in his face.

Little Billee was paralysed for a second or two; then he ran after Svengali, and caught him just at the top of the marble stairs, and kicked him, and knocked off his hat, and made him drop all his letters. Svengali turned round and struck him over the mouth and made it bleed, and Little Billee hit out like a fury, but with no effect: he couldn't reach high enough, for Svengali was well over six feet.

There was a crowd round them in a minute, including the beautiful old man in the court suit and gold chain, who called out:

'Vite! vite! un commissaire de police!'—a cry that was echoed all over the place.

Taffy saw the row, and shouted, 'Bravo, little 'un!' and jumping up from his table, jostled his way through the crowd; and Little Billee, bleeding and gasping and perspiring and stammering said: 'He spat in my face, Taffy—damn him! I'd never even spoken to him—not a word, I swear!'

Svengali had not reckoned on Taffy's being there; he recognised him at once, and turned white.

Taffy, who had dogskin gloves on, put out his right hand, and deftly seized Svengali's nose between his fore and middle fingers and nearly pulled it off, and swung his head two or three times backward and forward by it, and then from side to side, Svengali holding on to his wrist; and then, letting him go, gave him a sounding open-handed smack on his right cheek—and a smack on the face from Taffy (even in play) was no joke, I'm told; it made one smell brimstone, and see and hear things that didn't exist.

Svengali gasped worse than Little Billee, and couldn't speak for a while. Then he said:

'Lâche—grand lâche! che fous enferrai mes témoins!'

'At your orders!' said Taffy, in beautiful French, and drew out his card-case, and gave him his card in quite the orthodox French manner, adding: 'I shall be here till to-morrow at twelve—but that is my London address, in case I don't hear from you before I leave. I'm sorry, but you really mustn't spit, you know—it's not done. I will come to you whenever you send for me—even if I have to come from the end of the world.'

'Très bien! très bien!' said a military-looking old gentleman close by, who gave Taffy *his* card, in case he might be of any service—and who seemed quite delighted at the row—and indeed it was really pleasant to note with what a smooth, flowing, rhythmical spontaneity the good Taffy could always improvise these swift little acts of summary retributive justice: no hurry or scurry or flurry whatever—not an inharmonious gesture, not an infelicitous line—the very poetry of violence, and almost its only excuse!

Whatever it was worth, this was Taffy's special gift, and it never ailed him at a pinch.

When the commissaire de police arrived, all was over. Svengali had gone away in a cab, and Taffy put himself at the disposition of the commissaire.

They went into the post-office and discussed it all with the old military gentleman, and the majordome in velvet, and the two clerks who had seen the original insult. And all that was required of Taffy and his friends for the present was 'their names, prenames, titles, qualities, age, address, nationality, occupation,' etc.

'C'est une affaire qui s'arrangera autrement, et autre part!'



“VITE! VITE! UN COMMISSAIRE DE POLICE!”

had said the military gentleman—monsieur le général Comte de la Tour-aux-Loups.

So it blew over quite simply, and all that day a fierce unholy joy burned in Taffy's choleric blue eye.

Not, indeed, that he had any wish to injure Trilby's husband, or meant to do him any grievous bodily harm, whatever happened. But he was glad to have given Svengali a lesson in manners.

That Svengali should injure *him* never entered into his calculations for a moment. Besides, he didn't believe Svengali would show fight; and in this he was not mistaken.

But he had, for hours, the feel of that long, thick, shapely Hebrew nose being kneaded between his gloved knuckles, and a pleasing sense of the effectiveness of the tweak he had given it. So he went about chewing the cud of that heavenly remembrance all day, till reflection brought remorse, and he felt sorry; for he was really the mildest-mannered man that ever broke a head!

Only the sight of Little Billee's blood (which had been made to flow by such an unequal antagonist) had roused the old Adam.

No message came from Svengali to ask for the names and addresses of Taffy's seconds; so Dodor and Zouzou (not to mention Mister the general Count of the Tooraloorals, as the Laird called him) were left undisturbed; and our three musketeers went back to London clean of blood, whole of limb, and heartily sick of Paris.

Little Billee stayed with his mother and sister in Devonshire till Christmas, Taffy staying at the village inn.

It was Taffy who told Mrs. Bagot about La Svengali's all but certain identity with Trilby, after Little Billee had gone to bed, tired and worn out, the night of their arrival.

'Good heavens!' said poor Mrs. Bagot. 'Why, that's the new singing woman who's coming over here! There's an article about her in to-day's *Times*. It says she's a wonder, and that there's no one like her! Surely, that can't be the Miss O'Ferrall I saw in Paris!'

'It seems impossible—but I'm almost certain it is—and Willy has no doubts in the matter. On the other hand, M. Allister declares it isn't.'

'Oh, what trouble! So *that's* why poor Willy looks so ill and miserable! It's all come back again. Could she sing at all then, when you knew her in Paris?'

'Not a note—her attempts at singing were quite grotesque.'

'Is she still very beautiful?'

'Oh yes; there's no doubt about that; more than ever!'

'And her singing—is that so very wonderful? I remember that she had a beautiful voice in speaking.'

'Wonderful? Ah, yes; I never heard or dreamed the like of it. Grisi, Alboni, Patti—not one of them to be mentioned in the same breath!'

'Good heavens! Why, she must be simply irresistible! I wonder you're not in love with her yourself. How dreadful these sirens are, wrecking the peace of families!'

'You mustn't forget that she gave way at once at a word from you, Mrs. Bagot; and she was very fond of Willy. She wasn't a siren then.'

'Oh yes—oh yes! that's true—she behaved very well—she did her duty—I can't deny that! You must try and forgive me, Mr. Wynne—although I can't forgive *her*!—that dreadful illness of poor Willy's—that bitter time in Paris—'

And Mrs. Bagot began to cry, and Taffy forgave. 'Oh, Mr. Wynne, let us still hope that there's some mistake—that it's only somebody like her! Why, she's coming to sing in London after Christmas! My poor boy's infatuation will only increase. What *shall* I do?'

'Well—she's another man's wife, you see. So Willy's infatuation is bound to burn itself out as soon as he fully recognises that important fact. Besides, she cut him dead in the Champs Élysées—and her

husband and Willy had a row next day at the hotel, and cuffed and kicked each other—that's rather a bar to any future intimacy, I think.'

'Oh, Mr. Wynne! my son cuffing and kicking a man whose wife he's in love with! Good heavens!'

'Oh, it was all right—the man had grossly insulted him; and Willy behaved like a brick, and got the best of it in the end, and nothing came of it. I saw it all.'

'Oh, Mr. Wynne—and you didn't interfere?'

'Oh yes, I interfered—everybody interfered! It was all right, I assure you. No bones were broken on either side, and there was no nonsense about calling out, or swords or pistols, and all that.'

'Thank Heaven!'

In a week or two Little Billee grew more like himself again, and painted endless studies of rocks and cliffs and sea—and Taffy painted with him, and was very content. The vicar and Little Billee patched up their feud. The vicar also took an immense fancy to Taffy, whose cousin, Sir Oscar Wynne, he had known at college, and lost no opportunity of being hospitable and civil to him. And his daughter was away in Algiers.

And all 'the nobility and gentry' of the neighbourhood, including 'the poor dear marquis' (one of whose sons was in Taffy's old regiment), were civil and hospitable also to the two painters—and Taffy got as much sport as he wanted, and became immensely popular. And they had, on the whole, a very good time till Christmas, and a very pleasant Christmas, if not an exuberantly merry one.

After Christmas Little Billee insisted on going back to London—to paint a picture for the Royal Academy; and Taffy went with him; and there was dulness in the house of Bagot—and many misgivings in the maternal heart of its mistress.

And people of all kinds, high and low, from the family at the Court to the fishermen on the little pier and their wives and children, missed the two genial painters, who were the friends of everybody, and made such beautiful sketches of their beautiful coast.

* * * * *

La Svengali has arrived in London. Her name is in every mouth. Her photograph is in the shop-windows. She is to sing at J——'s monster concerts next week. She was to have sung sooner, but it seems some hitch has occurred—a quarrel between Monsieur Svengali and his first violin, who is a very important person.

A crowd of people as usual, only bigger, is assembled in front of the windows of the Stereoscopic Company in Regent Street, gazing at presentments of Madame Svengali in all sizes and costumes. She is very beautiful—there is no doubt of that; and the expression of her face is sweet and kind and sad, and of such a distinction that one feels an imperial crown would become her even better than her modest little coronet of golden stars. One of the photographs

represents her in classical dress, with her left foot on a little stool, in something of the attitude of the Venus of Milo, except that her hands are clasped behind her back; and the foot is bare but for a Greek sandal, and so smooth and delicate and charming, and with so rhythmical a set and curl of the five slender toes (the big one slightly tip-tilted and well apart from its longer and sligher and more aquiline neighbour), that this presentment of her sells quicker than all the rest.

And a little man who, with two bigger men, has just forced his way in front says to one of his friends: 'Look, Sandy, look—the foot! Now have you got any doubts?'

'Oh yes—those are Trilby's toes, sure enough!' says Sandy. And they all go in and purchase largely.

As far as I have been able to discover, the row between Svengali and his first violin had occurred at a rehearsal in Drury Lane Theatre.

Svengali, it seems, had never been quite the same since the 15th of October previous, and that was the day he had got his face slapped and his nose tweaked by Taffy in Paris. He had become short-tempered and irritable, especially with his wife (if she *was* his wife). Svengali, it seems, had reasons for passionately hating Little Billee.

He had not seen him for five years—not since the Christmas festivity in the Place St. Anatole, when they had sparred together after supper, and Svengali's nose had got in the way on this occasion, and had been made to bleed; but that was not why he hated Little Billee.

When he caught sight of him standing on the curb in the Place de la Concorde and watching the procession of 'tout Paris', he knew him directly, and all his hate flared up; he cut him dead, and made his wife do the same.

Next morning he saw him again in the hotel post-office, looking small and weak and flurried, and apparently alone; and being an Oriental Israelite Hebrew Jew, he had not been able to resist the temptation of spitting in his face, since he must not throttle him to death.

The minute he had done this he had regretted the folly of it. Little Billee had run after him, and kicked and struck him, and he had returned the blow and drawn blood; and then, suddenly and quite unexpectedly, had come upon the scene that apparition so loathed and dreaded of old—the pig-headed Yorkshireman—the huge British philistine, the irresponsible bull, the junker, the ex-Crimean, Front-de-Bœuf, who had always reminded him of the brutal and contemptuous sword-clanking, spurjngling aristocrats of his own country—ruffians that treated Jews like dogs. Callous as he was to the woes of others, the self-indulgent and highly-strung musician was extra sensitive about himself—a very bundle of nerves—and especially sensitive to pain and rough usage, and by no means physically brave. The stern, choleric, invincible blue eye of the hated northern Gentile had cowed him at once. And that violent tweaking

of his nose, that heavy open-handed blow on his face, had so shaken and demoralised him that he had never recovered from it.

He was thinking about it always—night and day—and constantly dreaming at night that he was being tweaked and slapped over again by a colossal nightmare Taffy, and waking up in agonies of terror, rage, and shame. All healthy sleep had forsaken him.

Moreover, he was much older than he looked—nearly fifty—and far from sound. His life had been a long, hard struggle.

He had for his wife, slave, and pupil a fierce, jealous kind of affection that was a source of endless torment to him; for indelibly graven in her heart, which he wished to occupy alone, was the never-fading image of the little English painter, and of this she made no secret.

Gecko no longer cared for the master. All Gecko's doglike devotion was concentrated on the slave and pupil, whom he worshipped with a fierce but pure and unselfish passion. The only living soul that Svengali could trust was the old Jewess who lived with them—his relative—but even she had come to love the pupil as much as the master.

On the occasion of this rehearsal at Drury Lane he (Svengali) was conducting and Madame Svengali was singing. He interrupted her several times, angrily and most unjustly, and told her she was singing out of tune, 'like a verfluchter tomcat,' which was quite untrue. She was singing beautifully, 'Home, Sweet Home.'

Finally he struck her two or three smart blows on her knuckles with his little bâton, and she fell on her knees, weeping and crying out: 'Oh, oh! Svengali! ne me battez pas, mon ami—je fais tout ce que je peux!'

On which little Gecko had suddenly jumped up and struck Svengali on the neck near the collar-bone, and then it was seen that he had a little bloody knife in his hand, and blood flowed from Svengali's neck, and at the sight of it Svengali had fainted; and Madame Svengali had taken his head on her lap, looking dazed and stupefied, as in a waking dream.

Gecko had been disarmed, but as Svengali recovered from his faint and was taken home, the police had not been sent for, and the affair was hushed up, and a public scandal avoided. But La Svengali's first appearance, to Monsieur J——'s despair, had to be put off for a week. For Svengali would not allow her to sing without him; nor, indeed, would he be parted from her for a minute, or trust her out of his sight.

The wound was a slight one. The doctor who attended Svengali described the wife as being quite imbecile, no doubt from grief and anxiety. But she never left her husband's bedside for a moment, and had the obedience and devotion of a dog.

When the night came round for the postponed *début*, Svengali was allowed by the doctor to go to the theatre, but he was absolutely forbidden to conduct. His grief and anxiety at this were uncontroll-

able; he raved like a madman; and Monsieur J—— was almost as bad.

Monsieur J—— had been conducting the Svengali band at rehearsals during the week, in the absence of its master—an easy task. It had been so thoroughly drilled and knew its business so well that it could almost conduct itself, and it had played all the music it had to play (much of which consisted of accompaniments to La Svengali's songs) many times before. Her *répertoire* was immense, and Svengali had written these orchestral scores with great care and felicity.

On the famous night it was arranged that Svengali should sit



THE FIRST VIOLIN LOSES HIS TEMPER

in a box alone, exactly opposite his wife's place on the platform, where she could see him well; and a code of simple signals was arranged between him and Monsieur J—— and the band, so that virtually he might conduct, himself, from his box, should any hesitation or hitch occur. This arrangement was rehearsed the day before (a Sunday) and had turned out quite successfully, and La Svengali had sung in perfection in the empty theatre.

When Monday evening arrived everything seemed to be going smoothly; the house was soon crammed to suffocation, all but the middle box on the grand tier. It was not a promenade concert, and the pit was turned into guinea stalls (the promenade concerts were to begin a week later).

Right in the middle of these stalls sat the Laird and Taffy and Little Billee.

The band came in by degrees and tuned their instruments.

Eyes were constantly being turned to the empty box, and people wondered what royal personages would appear.

Monsieur J—— took his place amid immense applause, and bowed in his inimitable way, looking often at the empty box.

Then he tapped and waved his bâton, and the band played its Hungarian dance music with immense success; when this was over there was a pause, and soon some signs of impatience from the gallery. Monsieur J—— had disappeared.



'HAST THOU FOUND ME, O MINE ENEMY?'

Taffy stood up, his back to the orchestra, looking round.

Some one came into the empty box, and stood for a moment in front, gazing at the house. A tall man, deathly pale, with long black hair and a beard.

It was Svengali.

He caught sight of Taffy and met his eyes, and Taffy said: 'Good God! Look! look!'

Then Little Billee and the Laird got up and looked.

And Svengali for a moment glared at them. And the expression of his face was so terrible with wonder, rage, and fear that they were quite appalled—and then he sat down, still glaring at Taffy, the whites of his eyes showing at the top, and his teeth bared in a spasmodic grin of hate.

Then thunders of applause filled the house, and turning round and seating themselves, Taffy and Little Billee and the Laird saw Trilby being led by J—— down the platform, between the players,

to the front, her face smiling rather vacantly, her eyes anxiously intent on Svengali in his box.

She made her bows to right and left just as she had done in Paris.

The band struck up the opening bars of 'Ben Bolt,' with which she was announced to make her *début*.

She still stared—but she didn't sing—and they played the little symphony three times.

One could hear Monsieur J—— in a hoarse, anxious whisper saying,

'Mais chantez donc, madame—pour l'amour de Dieu, commencez donc—commencez!'



'“OH, DON'T YOU REMEMBER SWEET ALICE, BEN BOLT?”'

She turned round with an extraordinary expression of face, and said,

'Chanter! pourquoi donc voulez-vous que je chante, moi? chanter quoi, alors?'

'Mais "Ben Bolt," parbleu—chantez!'

'Ah—"Ben Bolt!" oui—je connais ça!'

Then the band began again.

And she tried, but failed to begin herself. She turned round and said,

'Comment diable voulez-vous que je chante avec tout ce train qu'ils font, ces diables de musiciens!'

'Mais mon Dieu, madame—qu'est-ce que vous avez donc?' cried Monsieur J——.

'J'ai que j'aime mieux chanter sans toute cette satanée musique, parbleu! J'aime mieux chanter toute seule!'

'Sans musique, alors—mais chantez—chantez!'

The band was stopped—the house was in a state of indescribable wonder and suspense.

She looked all round, and down at herself, and fingered her dress. Then she looked up to the chandelier with a tender, sentimental smile and began—

'Oh, don't you remember sweet Alice, Ben Bolt?

Sweet Alice with hair so brown,

Who wept with delight when you gave her a smile—'

She had not got further than this when the whole house was in an uproar—shouts from the gallery—shouts of laughter, hoots, hisses, cat-calls, cock-crows.

She stopped and glared like a brave lioness, and called out—

'Qu'est-ce que vous avez donc, tous! tas de vieilles pommes cuites que vous êtes! Est-ce qu'on a peur de vous?' and then, suddenly—

'Why, you're all English, aren't you?—what's all the row about?—what have you brought me here for?—what have *I* done, I should like to know?'

And in asking these questions the depth and splendour of her voice were so extraordinary—its tone so pathetically feminine, yet so full of hurt and indignant command, that the tumult was stilled for a moment.

It was the voice of some being from another world—some insulted daughter of a race more puissant and nobler than ours; a voice that seemed as if it could never utter a false note.

Then came a voice from the gods in answer—

'Oh, ye're Henglish, har yer? Why don't yer sing as yer *hought* to sing—yer've got *voice* enough, any'ow! why don't yer sing in *tune*?''

'Sing in *tune*!' cried Trilby. 'I didn't want to sing at all—I only sang because I was asked to sing—that gentleman asked me—that French gentleman with the white waistcoat! I won't sing another note!'

'Oh, yer won't, won't yer! then let us 'ave our money back, or we'll know what for!'

And again the din broke out, and the uproar was frightful.

Monsieur J—screamed out across the theatre: 'Svengali! Svengali! qu'est-ce qu'elle a donc, votre femme? . . . Elle est devenue folle!'

Indeed she had tried to sing 'Ben Bolt,' but had sung it in her old way—as she used to sing it in the Quartier Latin—the most lamentably grotesque performance ever heard out of a human throat!

'Svengali! Svengali!' shrieked poor Monsieur J—, gesticulating towards the box where Svengali was sitting, quite impassible, gazing at Monsieur J—, and smiling a ghastly, sardonic smile, a *ricitus* of hate and triumphant revenge—as if he were saying—

'I've got the laugh of you *all*, this time!'

Taffy, the Laird, Little Billee, the whole house, were now staring at Svengali, and his wife was forgotten.

She stood vacantly looking at everybody and everything—the chan-delier, Monsieur J——, Svengali in his box, the people in the stalls, in the gallery—and smiling as if the noisy scene amused and excited her. ‘Svengali! Svengali! Svengali!’

The whole house took up the cry, derisively. Monsieur J—— led Madame Svengali away; she seemed quite passive. That terrible figure of Svengali still sat, immovable, watching his wife’s retreat—still smiling his ghastly smile. All eyes were now turned on him once more.

Monsieur J—— was then seen to enter his box with a policeman and two or three other men, one of them in evening dress. He quickly drew the curtains to; then, a minute or two after, he re-appeared on the platform, bowing and scraping to the audience, as pale as death, and called for silence, the gentleman in evening dress by his side; and this person explained that a very dreadful thing had happened—that Monsieur Svengali had suddenly died in that box—of apoplexy or heart disease; that his wife had seen it from her place on the stage, and had apparently gone out of her senses, which accounted for her extraordinary behaviour.

He added that the money would be returned at the doors, and begged the audience to disperse quietly.

Taffy, with his two friends behind him, forced his way to a stage door he knew. The Laird had no longer any doubts on the score of Trilby’s identity—*this* Trilby, at all events.

Taffy knocked and thumped till the door was opened, and gave his card to the man who opened it, stating that he and his friends were old friends of Madame Svengali, and must see her at once.

The man tried to slam the door in his face, but Taffy pushed through, and shut it on the crowd outside, and insisted on being taken to Monsieur J—— immediately; and was so authoritative and big, and looked such a swell, that the man was cowed, and led him.

They passed an open door, through which they had a glimpse of a prostrate form on a table—a man partially undressed, and some men bending over him, doctors probably.

That was the last they saw of Svengali.

Then they were taken to another door, and Monsieur J—— came out, and Taffy explained who they were, and they were admitted.

La Svengali was there, sitting in an armchair by the fire, while several of the band stood round gesticulating, and talking German or Polish or Yiddish. Gecko, on his knees, was alternately chafing her hands and feet. She seemed quite dazed.

But at the sight of Taffy she jumped up and rushed at him, saying: ‘Oh, Taffy dear—oh, Taffy! what’s it all about? Where on earth am I? What an age since we met!’

Then she caught sight of the Laird, and kissed him; and then she recognised Little Billee.

She looked at him for a long while in great surprise, and then shook hands with him.

'How pale you are! and so changed—you've got a moustache! What's the matter? Why are you all dressed in black, with white cravats, as if you were going to a funeral? Where's Svengali? I should like to go home!'

'Where—what do you call—home, I mean—where is it?' asked Taffy.

'C'est à l'Hôtel de Normandie, dans le Haymarket. On va vous y conduire, madame!' said Monsieur J——.



“THE LAST THEY SAW OF SVENGALI”

'Oui-c'est ça!' said Trilby—'Hôtel de Normandie—mais Svengali—où est-ce qu'il est?'

'Hélas! madame—il est très malade!'

'Malade? Qu'est-ce qu'il a? How funny you look, with your moustache, Little Billee! dear, dear Little Billee! so pale, so very pale! Are you ill too? Oh, I hope not! How glad I am to see you again—you can't tell! though I promised your mother I wouldn't—never, never! Where are we now, dear Little Billee?'

Monsieur J—— seemed to have lost his head. He was constantly running in and out of the room, distracted. The bandsmen began to talk and try to explain, in incomprehensible French, to Taffy. Gecko seemed to have disappeared. It was a bewildering business—noises from outside, the tramp and bustle and shouts of the depart-

ing crowd, people running in and out and asking for Monsieur J——, policemen, firemen, and what not!

Then Little Billee, who had been exerting the most heroic self-control, suggested that Trilby should come to his house in Fitzroy Square, first of all, and be taken out of all this—and the idea struck Taffy as a happy one—and it was proposed to Monsieur J——, who saw that our three friends were old friends of Madame Svengali's, and people to be trusted; and he was only too glad to be relieved of her, and gave his consent.

Little Billee and Taffy drove to Fitzroy Square to prepare Little Billee's landlady, who was much put out at first at having such a novel and unexpected charge imposed on her. It was all explained to her that it must be so. That Madame Svengali, the greatest singer in Europe and an old friend of her tenant's, had suddenly gone out of her mind from grief at the tragic death of her husband, and that for this night at least the unhappy lady must sleep under that roof—indeed, in Little Billee's own bed, and that he would sleep at a hotel; and that a nurse would be provided at once—it might be only for that one night; and that the lady was as quiet as a lamb, and would probably recover her faculties after a night's rest. A doctor was sent for from close by, and soon Trilby appeared, with the Laird, and her appearance and her magnificent sables impressed Mrs. Godwin, the landlady—brought her figuratively on her knees. Then Taffy, the Laird, and Little Billee departed again and dispersed—to procure a nurse for the night, to find Gecko, to fetch some of Trilby's belongings from the Hôtel de Normandie, and her maid.

The maid (the old German Jewess and Svengali's relative), distracted by the news of her master's death, had gone to the theatre. Gecko was in the hands of the police. Things had got to a terrible pass. But our three friends did their best, and were up most of the night.

So much for La Svengali's *début* in London.

The present scribe was not present on that memorable occasion, and has written this inadequate and most incomplete description partly from hearsay and private information, partly from the reports in the contemporary newspapers.

Should any surviving eye-witness of that lamentable fiasco read these pages, and see any gross inaccuracy in this bald account of it, the P. S. will feel deeply obliged to the same for any corrections or additions, and these will be duly acted upon and gratefully acknowledged in all subsequent editions; which will be numerous, no doubt, on account of the great interest still felt in 'La Svengali,' even by those who never saw or heard her (and they are many), and also because the present scribe is better qualified (by his opportunities) for the compiling of this brief biographical sketch than any person now living, with the exception, of course, of 'Taffy' and 'the Laird,' to whose kindness, even more than to his own personal recollections, he owes whatever it may contain of serious historical value.

Next morning they all three went to Fitzroy Square. Little Billee had slept at Taffy's rooms in Jermyn Street.

Trilby seemed quite pathetically glad to see them again. She was dressed simply and plainly—in black; her trunks had been sent from the hotel.

The hospital nurse was with her; the doctor had just left. He had said that she was suffering from some great nervous shock—a pretty safe diagnosis!

Her wits had apparently not come back, and she seemed in no way to realise her position.

'Ah! what it is to see you again, all three! It makes one feel glad to be alive! I've thought of many things, but never of this—never! Three nice clean Englishmen, all speaking English—and *such* dear old friends! Ah! j'aime tant ça—c'est le ciel! I wonder I've got a word of English left!'

Her voice was so soft and sweet and low that these ingenuous remarks sounded like a beautiful song. And she 'made the soft eyes' at them all three, one after another, in her old way; and the soft eyes quickly filled with tears.

She seemed ill and weak and worn out, and insisted on keeping the Laird's hand in hers.

'What's the matter with Svengali? He must be dead!'

They all three looked at each other, perplexed.

'Ah! he's dead! I can see it in your faces. He'd got heart disease. I'm sorry! oh, very sorry indeed! He was always very kind, poor Svengali!'

'Yes. He's dead,' said Taffy.

'And Gecko—dear little Gecko—is he dead too? I saw him last night—he warmed my hands and feet: where were we?'

'No. Gecko's not dead. But he's had to be locked up for a little while. He struck Svengali, you know. You saw it all.'

'I? No! I never saw it. But I *dreamt* something like it! Gecko with a knife, and people holding him, and Svengali bleeding on the ground. That was just before Svengali's illness. He'd cut himself in the neck, you know—with a rusty nail, he told me. I wonder how? . . . But it was wrong of Gecko to strike him. They were such friends. Why did he?'

'Well—it was because Svengali struck you with his conductor's wand when you were rehearsing. Struck you on the fingers and made you cry! don't you remember?'

'Struck *me*! *rehearsing*?—made *me* cry! what *are* you talking about, dear Taffy? Svengali never *struck* me! He was kindness itself—always! and what should I rehearse?'

'Well, the songs you were to sing at the theatre in the evening.'

'Sing at the theatre! I never sang at any theatre—except last night, if that big place was a theatre! and they didn't seem to like it! I'll take precious good care never to sing in a theatre again! How they howled! and there was Svengali in the box opposite, laughing

at me. Why was I taken there? and why did that funny little Frenchman in the white waistcoat ask me to sing? I know very well I can't sing well enough to sing in a place like that! What a fool I was! It all seems like a bad dream! What was it all about? Was it a dream, I wonder!

'Well—but don't you remember singing at Paris, in the Salle des Bashibazoucks—and at Vienna—St. Petersburg—lots of places?'

'What nonsense, dear—you're thinking of some one else! I never sang anywhere! I've been to Vienna and St. Petersburg—but I never sang there—good heavens!'

Then there was a pause, and our three friends looked at her helplessly.

Little Billee said: 'Tell me, Trilby—what made you cut me dead when I bowed to you in the Place de la Concorde, and you were riding with Svengali in that swell carriage?'

'I never rode in a swell carriage with Svengali! Omnibuses were more in *our* line! You're dreaming, dear Little Billee—you're taking me for somebody else; and as for my cutting *you*—why, I'd sooner cut myself—into little pieces!'

'Where were you staying with Svengali in Paris?'

'I really forget. Were we in Paris? Oh yes, of course. Hôtel Bertrand, Place Notre Dame des Victoires.'

'How long have you been going about with Svengali?'

'O, months, years—I forget. I was very ill. He cured me.'

'Ill! What was the matter?'

'Oh! I was mad with grief, and pain in my eyes, and wanted to kill myself, when I lost my dear little Jeannot, at Vibraye. I fancied I hadn't been careful enough with him. I was crazed! Don't you remember writing to me there, Taffy—through Angèle Boisse? Such a sweet letter you wrote! I know it by heart! And you too, Sandy'; and she kissed him. 'I wonder where they are, your letters? I've got nothing of my own in the world—not even your dear letters—nor Little Billee's—such lots of them!'

'Well, Svengali used to write to me too—and then he got my address from Angèle....'

'When Jeannot died, I felt I must kill myself or get away from Vibraye—get away from the people there; so when he was buried I cut my hair short and got a workman's cap and blouse and trousers and walked all the way to Paris without saying anything to anybody. I didn't want anybody to know; I wanted to escape from Svengali, who wrote that he was coming there to fetch me. I wanted to hide in Paris. When I got there at last it was two o'clock in the morning, and I was in dreadful pain—and I'd lost all my money—thirty francs—through a hole in my trousers' pocket. Besides, I had a row with a carter in the Halle. He thought I was a man, and hit me and gave me a black eye, just because I patted his horse and fed it with a carrot I'd been trying to eat myself. He was tipsy, I think. Well, I looked over the bridge at the river—just by the Morgue—

and wanted to jump in. But the Morgue sickened me, so I hadn't the pluck. Svengali used to be always talking about the Morgue, and my going there some day. He used to say he'd come and look at me there, and the idea made me so sick I couldn't. I got bewildered and quite stupid.

'Then I went to Angèle's, in the Rue des Cloîtres Ste. Pétronille, and waited about; but I hadn't the courage to ring, so I went to the Place St. Anatole des Arts, and looked up at the old studio window, and thought how comfortable it was in there, with the big settee near the stove, and all that, and felt inclined to ring up Madame



'PENNA PEDE CLAUDO'

Vinard; and then I remembered Little Billee was ill there, and his mother and sister were with him. Angèle had written me, you know. Poor Little Billee! There he was, very ill!

'So I walked about the place, and up and down the Rue des Trois Mauvais Ladres. Then I went down the Rue de Seine to the river again, and again I hadn't the pluck to jump in. Besides, there was a *sergent-de-ville* who followed and watched me. And the fun of it was that I knew him quite well, and he didn't know me a bit. It was Célestin Beaumollet, who got so tipsy on Christmas night. Don't you remember? The tall one, who was pitted with the small-pox.

'Then I walked about till near daylight. Then I could stand it no longer, and went to Svengali's, in the Rue Tireliard, but he'd

moved to the Rue des Saints Pères; and I went there and found him. I didn't want to a bit, but I couldn't help myself. It was fate, I suppose! He was very kind, and cured me almost directly, and got me coffee and bread and butter—the best I ever tasted—and a warm bath from Bidet Frères, in the Rue Savonarole. It was heavenly! And I slept for two days and two nights! And then he told me how fond he was of me, and how he would always cure me, and take care of me, and marry me, if I would go away, with him. He said he would devote his whole life to me, and took a small room for me, next to his.

'I stayed with him there a week, never going out or seeing any one, mostly asleep. I'd caught a chill.

'He played in two concerts and made a lot of money; and then we went away to Germany together; and no one was a bit the wiser.'

'And *did* he marry you?'

'Well—no. He couldn't, poor fellow! He'd already got a wife living, and three children, which he declared were not his. They live in Elberfeld in Prussia; she keeps a small sweet-stuff shop there. He behaved very badly to them. But it was not through me! He'd deserted them long before; but he used to send them plenty of money when he'd got any; I made him, for I was very sorry for her. He was always talking about her, and what she said and what she did, and imitating her saying her prayers and eating pickled cucumber with one hand and drinking schnapps with the other, so as not to lose any time; till he made me die of laughing. He could be very funny, Svengali, though he *was* German, poor dear! And then Gecko joined us, and Marta.'

'Who's Marta?'

'His aunt. She cooked for us, and all that. She's coming here presently; she sent word from the hotel; she's very fond of him. Poor Marta! Poor Gecko! What *will* they ever do without Svengali?'

'Then what did he do to live?'

'Oh! he played at concerts, I suppose—and all that.'

'Did you ever hear him?'

'Yes. Sometimes Marta took me; at the beginning, you know. He was always very much applauded. He plays beautifully. Everybody said so.'

'Did he never try and teach you to sing?'

'Oh, maie aie! not he! Why, he always laughed when I tried to sing; and so did Marta; and so did Gecko! It made them roar! I used to sing „Ben Bolt.” They used to make me, just for fun—and go into fits. I didn't mind a scrap. I'd had no training, you know!'

'Was there anybody else he knew—any other woman?'

'Not that I know of! He always made out he was so fond of me that he couldn't even *look* at another woman. Poor Svengali! (Here her eyes filled with tears again.) 'He was always very kind. But I never could be fond of him in the way he wished—never! It made me sick even to think of! Once I used to hate him—in Paris—in the studio; don't you remember?'

'He hardly ever left me; and then Marta looked after me—for I've always been weak and ill, and often so languid that I could hardly walk across the room. It was that three days' walk from Vibraye to Paris. I never got over it.

'I used to try and do all I could—be a daughter to him, as I couldn't be anything else—mend his things, and all that, and cook him little French dishes. I fancy he was very poor at one time; we were always moving from place to place. But I always had the best



'THE OLD STUDIO'

of everything. He insisted on that—even if he had to go without himself. It made him quite unhappy when I wouldn't eat, so I used to force myself.

'Then, as soon as I felt uneasy about things, or had any pain, he would say, "Dors, ma mignonne!" and I would sleep at once—for hours, I think—and wake up oh, so tired! and find him kneeling by me, always so anxious and kind—and Marta and Gecko! and sometimes we had the doctor, and I was ill in bed.

'Gecko used to dine and breakfast with us—you've no idea what an angel he is, poor little Gecko! But what a dreadful thing to strike Svengali! Why did he? Svengali taught him all he knows!'

'And you knew no one else—no other woman?'

'No one that I can remember—except Marta—not a soul!'

'And that beautiful dress you had on last night?'

'It isn't mine. It's on the bed upstairs, and so's the fur cloak. They belong to Marta. She's got lots of them, lovely things—silk, satin, velvet—and lots of beautiful jewels. Marta deals in them, and makes lots of money.

'I've often tried them on; I'm very easy to fit,' she said, 'being so tall and thin. And poor Svengali would kneel down and cry, and kiss my hands and feet, and tell me I was his goddess and empress, and all that, which I hate. And Marta used to cry, too. And then he would say—

'*"Et maintenant dors, ma mignonne!"*

'And when I woke up I was so tired that I went to sleep again on my own account.

'But he was very patient. Oh, dear me! I've always been a poor, helpless, useless log and burden to him!

'Once I actually walked in my sleep—and woke up in the market-place at Prague—and found an immense crowd, and poor Svengali bleeding from the forehead, in a faint on the ground. He'd been knocked down by a horse and cart, he told me. He'd got his guitar with him. I suppose he and Gecko had been playing somewhere, for Gecko had his fiddle. If Gecko hadn't been there, I don't know what we should have done. You never saw such queer people as they were—such crowds—you'd think they'd never seen an English-woman before. The noise they made, and the things they gave me . . . some of them went down on their knees, and kissed my hands and the skirts of my gown.

'He was ill in bed for a week after that, and I nursed him, and he was very grateful. Poor Svengali! God knows I felt grateful to him for many things! Tell me how he died! I hope he hadn't much pain.'

They told her it was quite sudden, from heart disease.

'Ah! I knew he had that; he wasn't a healthy man; he used to smoke too much. Marta used always to be very anxious.'

Just then Marta came in.

Marta was a fat elderly Jewess of rather a grotesque and ignoble type. She seemed overcome with grief—all but prostrate.

Trilby hugged and kissed her, and took off her bonnet and shawl, and made her sit down in a big arm-chair, and got her a foot-stool.

She couldn't speak a word of anything but Polish and a little German. Trilby had also picked up a little German, and with this and by means of signs, and no doubt through a long intimacy with each other's ways, they understood each other very well. She seemed a very good old creature, and very fond of Trilby, but in mortal terror of the three Englishmen.

Lunch was brought up for the two women and the nurse, and our friends left them, promising to come again that day.

They were utterly bewildered; and the Laird would have it that there was another Madame Svengali somewhere, the real one, and that Trilby was a fraud—self-deceived and self-deceiving—quite unconsciously so, of course.

Truth looked out of her eyes, as it always had done—truth was in every line of her face.

The truth only—nothing but the truth could ever be told in that 'voice of velvet,' which rang as true when she spoke as that of any thrush or nightingale, however rebellious it might be now (and for ever perhaps) to artificial melodic laws and limitations and restraints.



"ET MAINTENANT DORS, MA MIGNONNE!"

The long training it had been subjected to had made it 'a wonder, a world's delight,' and though she might never sing another note, her mere speech would always be more golden than any silence, whatever she might say.

Except on the one particular point of her singing, she had seemed absolutely sane—so, at least, thought Taffy, the Laird, and Little Billee. And each thought to himself, besides, that this last incarnation of Trilbiness was quite the sweetest, most touching, most endearing of all.

They had not failed to note how rapidly she had aged, now that they had seen her without her rouge and pearl powder; she looked thirty at least—she was only twenty-three.

Her hands were almost transparent in their waxen whiteness; delicate little frosty wrinkles had gathered round her eyes; there were gray streaks in her hair; all strength and straightness and elasticity seemed to have gone out of her with the memory of her endless triumphs (if she really *was* La Svengali), and of her many wanderings from city to city all over Europe.

It was evident enough that the sudden stroke which had destroyed her power of singing had left her physically a wreck.

But she was one of those rarely-gifted beings who cannot look or speak or even stir without waking up (and satisfying) some vague longing that lies dormant in the hearts of most of us, men and women alike; grace, charm, magnetism—whatever the nameless seduction should be called that she possessed to such an unusual degree—she had lost none of it when she lost her high spirits, her buoyant health and energy, her wits!

Tuneless and insane, she was more of a siren than ever—a quite unconscious siren—without any guile, who appealed to the heart all the more directly and irresistibly that she could no longer stir the passions.

All this was keenly felt by all three—each in his different way—by Taffy and Little Billee especially.

All her past life was forgiven—her sins of omission and commission! And whatever might be her fate—recovery, madness, disease, or death—the care of her till she died or recovered should be the principal business of their lives.

Both had loved her. All three, perhaps. One had been loved by her as passionately, as purely, as unselfishly, as any man could wish to be loved, and in some extraordinary manner had recovered, after many years, at the mere sudden sight and sound of her, his lost share in our common inheritance—the power to love, and all its joy and sorrow; without which he had found life not worth living, though he had possessed every other gift and blessing in such abundance.

'Oh, Circe, poor Circe, dear Circe, divine enchantress that you were!' he said to himself, in his excitable way. 'A mere look from your eyes, a mere note of your heavenly voice, has turned a poor, miserable, callous brute back into a man again! and I will never forget it—never! And now that a still worse trouble than mine has befallen you, you shall always be first in my thoughts till the end!'

And Taffy felt pretty much the same, though he was not by way of talking to himself so eloquently about things as Little Billee.

As they lunched, they read the accounts of the previous evening's events in different papers, three or four of which (including the *Times*) had already got leaders about the famous but unhappy singer who had been so suddenly widowed and struck down in the midst of her glory. All these accounts were more or less correct. In one paper it was mentioned that Madame Svengali was under

the roof and care of Mr. William Bagot, the painter, in Fitzroy Square.

The inquest on Svengali was to take place that afternoon, and also Gecko's examination at the Bow Street Police Court, for his assault.

Taffy was allowed to see Gecko, who was remanded till the result of the *post-mortem* should be made public. But beyond inquiring most anxiously and minutely after Trilby, and betraying the most passionate concern for her, he would say nothing, and seemed indifferent as to his own fate.

When they went to Fitzroy Square, late in the afternoon, they found that many people, musical, literary, fashionable, and otherwise (and many foreigners), had called to inquire after Madame Svengali, but no one had been admitted to see her. Mrs. Godwin was much elated by the importance of her new lodger.

Trilby had been writing to Angèle Boisse, at her old address in the Rue des Cloîtres Ste. Pétronille, in the hope that this letter would find her still there. She was anxious to go back and be a *blanchisseuse de fin* with her friend. It was a kind of nostalgia for Paris, the Quartier Latin, her clean old trade.

This project our three heroes did not think it necessary to discuss with her just yet; she seemed quite unfit for work of any kind.

The doctor, who had seen her again, had been puzzled by her strange physical weakness, and wished for a consultation with some special authority; Little Billee, who was intimate with most of the great physicians, wrote about her to Sir Oliver Calthorpe.

She seemed to find a deep happiness in being with her three old friends, and talked and listened with all her old eagerness and geniality, and much of her old gaiety, in spite of her strange and sorrowful position. But for this it was impossible to realise that her brain was affected in the slightest degree, except when some reference was made to her singing, and this seemed to annoy and irritate her, as though she were being made fun of. The whole of her marvellous musical career, and everything connected with it, had been clean wiped out of her recollection.

She was very anxious to get into other quarters, that Little Billee should suffer no inconvenience, and they promised to take rooms for her and Marta on the morrow.

They told her cautiously all about Svengali and Gecko; she was deeply concerned, but betrayed no such poignant anguish as might have been expected. The thought of Gecko troubled her most, and she showed much anxiety as to what might befall him.

Next day she moved with Marta to some lodgings in Charlotte Street, where everything was made as comfortable for them as possible.

Sir Oliver saw her with Dr. Thorne (the doctor who was attending her) and Dr. Jakes Talboys.

Sir Oliver took the greatest interest in her case, both for her sake and his friend Little Billee's. Also his own, for he was charmed with her. He saw her three times in the course of the week, but could not say for certain what was the matter with her, beyond taking the very gravest view of her condition. For all he could advise or prescribe, her weakness and physical prostration increased rapidly, through no cause he could discover. Her insanity was not enough to account for it. She lost weight daily; she seemed to be wasting and fading away from sheer general atrophy.

Two or three times he took her and Marta for a drive.

On one of these occasions, as they went down Charlotte Street, she saw a shop with transparent French blinds in the window, and through them some French women, with neat white caps, ironing. It was a French *blanchisserie de fin*, and the sight of it interested and excited her so much that she must needs insist on being put down and on going into it.

'Je voudrais bien parler à la patronne, si ça ne la dérange pas,' she said.

The *patronne*, a genial Parisian, was much astonished to hear a great French lady, in costly garments, evidently a person of fashion and importance, applying to her rather humbly for employment in the business, and showing a thorough knowledge of the work (and of the Parisian workwoman's colloquial dialect). Marta managed to catch the *patronne's* eye, and tapped her own forehead significantly, and Sir Oliver nodded. So the good woman humoured the great lady's fancy, and promised her abundance of employment whenever she should want it.

Employment! Poor Trilby was hardly strong enough to walk back to the carriage; and this was her last outing.

But this little adventure had filled her with hope and good spirits—for she had as yet received no answer from Angèle Boisse (who was in Marseilles), and had begun to realise how dreary the Quartier Latin would be without Jeannot, without Angèle, without the *trois Angliches* in the Place St. Anatole des Arts.

She was not allowed to see any of the strangers who came and made kind inquiries. This her doctors had strictly forbidden. Any reference to music or singing irritated her beyond measure. She would say to Marta, in bad German—

'Tell them, Marta—what nonsense it is! They are taking me for another—they are mad. They are trying to make a fool of me!'

And Marta would betray great uneasiness—almost terror—when she was appealed to in this way.

PART EIGHTH

'La vie est vaine:
Un peu d'amour,
Un peu de haine. . . .
Et puis—bonjour!

'La vie est brève:
Un peu d'espoir,
Un peu de rêve. . . .
Et puis—bonsoir.'

SVENGALI had died from heart disease. The cut he had received from Gecko had not apparently (as far as the verdict of a coroner's inquest could be trusted) had any effect in aggravating his malady or hastening his death.

But Gecko was sent for trial at the Old Bailey, and sentenced to hard labour for six months (a sentence which, if I remember aright, gave rise to much comment at the time). Taffy saw him again, but with no better result than before. He chose to preserve an obstinate silence on his relations with the Svengalis and their relations with each other.

When he was told how hopelessly ill and insane Madame Svengali was, he shed a few tears, and said: 'Ah, pauvrete, pauvrete—ah! monsieur—je l'aimais tant, je l'aimais tant! il n'y en a pas beaucoup comme elle, Dieu de misère! C'est un ange du Paradis!'

And not another word was to be got out of him.

It took some time to settle Svengali's affairs after his death. No will was found. His old mother came over from Germany, and two of his sisters, but no wife. The comic wife and the three children, and the sweet-stuff shop in Elberfeld, had been humorous inventions of his own—a kind of Mrs. Harris!

He left three thousand pounds, every penny of which (and of far larger sums that he had spent) had been earned by 'La Svengali,' but nothing came to Trilby of this; nothing but the clothes and jewels he had given her, and in this respect he had been lavish enough; and there were countless costly gifts from emperors, kings, great people of all kinds. Trilby was under the impression that all these belonged to Marta. Marta behaved admirably; she seemed bound hand and foot to Trilby by a kind of slavish adoration, as that of a plain old mother for a brilliant and beautiful but dying child.

It soon became evident that, whatever her disease might be, Trilby had but a very short time to live.

She was soon too weak even to be taken out in a Bath chair, and remained all day in her large sitting-room with Marta; and there, to her great and only joy, she received her three old friends every afternoon, and gave them coffee, and made them smoke cigarettes

of caporal as of old; and their hearts were daily harrowed as they watched her rapid decline.

Day by day she grew more beautiful in their eyes, in spite of her increasing pallor and emaciation—her skin was so pure and white and the bones of her face so admirable!

Her eyes recovered all their old humorous brightness when *les trois Angliches* were with her, and the expression of her face was so wistful and tender for all her playfulness, so full of eager clinging to existence and to them, that they felt the memory of it would haunt them for ever, and be the sweetest and saddest memory of their lives.

Her quick, though feeble gestures, full of reminiscences of the vigorous and lively girl they had known a few years back, sent waves of pity through them and pure brotherly love; and the incomparable tones and changes and modulations of her voice, as she chatted and laughed, bewitched them almost as when she had sung the 'Nussbaum' of Schumann in the Salle des Bashibazoucks.

Sometimes Lorrimer came, and Antony, and the Greek. It was like a genial court of bohemia. And Lorrimer, Antony, the Laird, and Little Billee made those beautiful chalk and pencil studies of her head which are now so well known—all so singularly like her, and so singularly unlike each other! *Trilby vue à travers quatre tempéraments!*

These afternoons were probably the happiest poor Trilby had ever spent in her life—with these dear people round her, speaking the language she loved, talking of old times and jolly Paris days she never thought of the morrow.

But later—at night, in the small hours—she would wake up with a start from some dream full of tender and blissful recollection, and suddenly realise her own mischance, and feel the icy hand of that which was to come before many morrows were over; and taste the bitterness of death so keenly that she longed to scream out loud, and get up, and walk up and down, and wring her hands at the dreadful thought of parting for ever!

But she lay motionless and mum a poor little frightened mouse in a trap, for fear of waking up the good old tired Marta, who was snoring at her side.

And in an hour or two the bitterness would pass away, the creeps and the horrors; and the stoical spirit of resignation would steal over her—the balm, the blessed calm! and all her old bravery would come back.

And then she would sink into sleep again, and dream more blissfully than ever, till the good Marta woke her with a motherly kiss and a fragrant cup of coffee; and she would find, feeble as she was, and doomed as she felt herself to be, that joy cometh of a morning; and life was still sweet for her, with yet a whole day to look forward to.

One day she was deeply moved at receiving a visit from Mrs.

Bagot, who, at Little Billee's earnest desire, had come all the way from Devonshire to see her.

As the graceful little lady came in, pale and trembling all over, Trilby rose from her chair to receive her, and rather timidly put out her hand, and smiled in a frightened manner. Neither could speak for a second. Mrs. Bagot stood stock-still by the door gazing (with all her heart in her eyes) at the so terribly altered Trilby—the girl she had once so dreaded.

Trilby, who seemed also bereft of motion, and whose face and lips were ashen, exclaimed, 'I'm afraid I haven't quite kept my promise to you, after all! but things have turned out so differently! anyhow, you needn't have any fear of me *now*.'

At the mere sound of that voice, Mrs. Bagot, who was as implusive, emotional, and unregulated as her son, rushed forward, crying, 'Oh, my poor girl, my poor girl!' and caught her in her arms, and kissed and caressed her, and burst into a flood of tears, and forced her back into her chair, hugging her as if she were a long-lost child.

'I love you now as much as I always admired you—pray believe it!'

'Oh, how kind of you to say that!' said Trilby, her own eyes filling. 'I'm not at all the dangerous or designing person you thought. I knew quite well I wasn't a proper person to marry your son all the time; and told him so again and again. It was very stupid of me to say yes at last. I was miserable directly after, I assure you. Somehow I couldn't help myself—I was driven.'

'Oh, don't talk of that! don't talk of that! You've never been to blame in any way—I've long known it—I've been full of remorse! You've been in my thoughts always, night and day. Forgive a poor jealous mother. As if *any* man could help loving you—or any woman either. Forgive me!'

'Oh, Mrs. Bagot—forgive *you*! What a funny idea! But, anyhow, you have forgiven *me*, and that's all I care for now. I was very fond of your son—as fond as could be. I am now, but in quite a different sort of way, you know—the sort of way *you* must be, I fancy! There was never another like him that I ever met—anywhere! You *must* be so proud of him; who wouldn't? *Nobody's* good enough for him. I would have been only too glad to be his servant, his humble servant! I used to tell him so—but he wouldn't hear of it—he was much too kind! He always thought of others before himself. And, oh! how rich and famous he's become! I've heard all about it, and it did me good. It does me more good to think of than anything else; far more than if I were to be ever so rich and famous myself, I can tell you!'

This from La Svengali, whose overpowering fame, so utterly forgotten by herself, was still ringing all over Europe; whose lamentable illness and approaching death were being mourned and discussed and commented upon in every capital of the civilised world, as one distressing bulletin appeared after another. She might have been a royal personage!

Mrs. Bagot knew, of course, the strange form her insanity had taken, and made no allusion to the flood of thoughts that rushed through her own brain as she listened to this towering goddess of song, this poor mad queen of the nightingales, humbly gloating over her son's success....

Poor Mrs. Bagot had just come from Little Billee's in Fitzroy Square, close by. There she had seen Taffy, in a corner of Little Billee's studio, laboriously answering endless letters and telegrams from all parts of Europe—for the good Taffy had constituted himself Trilby's secretary and *homme d'affaires*—unknown to her, of course. And this was no sinecure (though he liked it): putting aside the numerous people he had to see and be interviewed by, there were kind inquiries and messages of condolence and sympathy from nearly all the crowned heads of Europe, through their chamberlains; applications for help from unsuccessful musical strugglers all over the world to the pre-eminently successful one; beautiful letters from great and famous people, musical or otherwise; disinterested offers of service; interested proposals for engagements when the present trouble should be over; beggings for an interview from famous *impresarios*, to obtain which no distance would be thought too great, etc. etc. It was endless, in English, French, German, Italian—in languages quite incomprehensible (many letters had to remain unanswered)—Taffy took an almost malicious pleasure in explaining all this to Mrs. Bagot.

Then there was a constant rolling of carriages up to the door, and a thundering of Little Billee's knocker: Lord and Lady Palmerston wish to know—the Lord Chief Justice wishes to know—the Dean of Westminster wishes to know—the Marchioness of Westminster wishes to know—everybody wishes to know if there is any better news of Madame Svengali!

These were small things, truly; but Mrs. Bagot was a small person from a small village in Devonshire, and one whose heart and eye had hitherto been filled by no larger image than that of Little Billee; and Little Billee's fame, as she now discovered for the first time, did not quite fill the entire universe.

And she mustn't be too much blamed if all these obvious signs of a world-wide colossal celebrity impressed and even awed her a little.

Madame Svengali! Why, this was the beautiful girl whom she remembered so well, whom she had so grandly discarded with a word, and who had accepted her *congé* so meekly in a minute; whom, indeed, she had been cursing in her heart for years, because—because what?

Poor Mrs. Bagot felt herself turn hot and red all over, and humbled herself to the very dust, and almost forgot that she had been in the right, after all, and that 'la grande Trilby' was certainly no fit match for her son!

So she went quite humbly to see Trilby, and found a poor pathetic

mad creature still more humble than herself, who still apologised for—for what?

A poor, pathetic, mad creature who had clean forgotten that she was the greatest singer in all the world—one of the greatest artists that had ever lived; but who remembered with shame and contrition that she had once taken the liberty of yielding (after endless pressure and repeated disinterested refusals of her own, and out of sheer irresistible affection) to the passionate pleadings of a little obscure art student, a mere boy—no better off than herself—just as penniless and insignificant a nobody; but—the son of Mrs. Bagot!

All due sense of proportion died out of the poor lady as she remembered and realised all this!

And then Trilby's pathetic beauty, so touching, so winning, in its rapid decay; the nameless charm of look and voice and manner that was her special appanage, and which her malady and singular madness had only increased; her childlike simplicity, her transparent forgetfulness of self—all these so fascinated and entranced Mrs. Bagot, whose quick susceptibility to such impressions was just as keen as her son's that she very soon found herself all but worshipping this fast-fading lily—for so she called her in her own mind—quite forgetting (or affecting to forget) on what very questionable soil the lily had been reared, and through what strange vicissitudes of evil and corruption it had managed to grow so tall and white and fragrant!

Oh, strange compelling power of weakness and grace and prettiness combined, and sweet, sincere unconscious natural manners! not to speak of world-wide fame!

For Mrs. Bagot was just a shrewd little conventional British country matron of the good upper middle-class type, bristling all over with provincial proprieties and respectabilities, a philistine of the philistines, in spite of her artistic instincts; one who for years had (rather unjustly) thought of Trilby as a wanton and perilous siren, an unchaste and unprincipled and most dangerous daughter of Heth, and the special enemy of her house.

And here she was—like all the rest of us monads and nomads and bohemians—just sitting at Trilby's feet.

.... 'A washerwoman! a figure modell and Heaven knows what besides!' and she had never even heard her sing!

It was truly comical to see and hear!

Mrs. Bagot did not go back to Devonshire. She remained in Fitzroy Square, at her son's and spent most of her time with Trilby, doing and devising all kinds of things to distract and amuse her, and lead her thoughts gently to heaven, and soften for her the coming end of all.

Trilby had a way of saying, and especially of looking, 'Thank you' that made one wish to do as many things for her as one could, if only to make her say and look it again.

And she had retained much of her old, quaint, and amusing

manner of telling things, and had much to tell still left of her wandering life, although there were so many, strange lapses in her powers of memory—gaps—which, if they could only have been filled up, would have been full of such surpassing interest!

Then she was never tired of talking and hearing of Little Billee; and that was a subject of which Mrs. Bagot could never tire either!

Then there were the recollections of her childhood. One day, in a drawer, Mrs. Bagot came upon a faded daguerreotype of a woman in a 'Tam o' Shanter, with a face so sweet and beautiful and saint-like that it almost took her breath away. It was Trilby's mother.

'Who and what was your mother, Trilby?'

'Ah, poor mamma!' said Trilby, and she looked at the portrait a long time. 'Ah, she was ever so much prettier than that! Mamma was once a *demoiselle de comptoir*—that's a barmaid, you know—at the Montagnards Écossais, in the Rue du Paradis Poissonnière—a place where men used to drink and smoke without sitting down. That was unfortunate, wasn't it?'

'Papa loved her with all his heart, although, of course, she wasn't his equal. They were married at the Embassy, in the Rue du Faubourg St.-Honoré.

'Her parents weren't married at all. Her mother was the daughter of a boatman on Loch Ness, near a place called Drumnadrochit; but her father was the Honourable Colonel Desmond. He was related to all sorts of great people in England and Ireland. He behaved very badly to my grandmother and to poor mamma—his own daughter! deserted them both! Not very *honourable* of him, was it? And that's all I know about him.'

And then she went on to tell of the home in Paris that might have been so happy but for her father's passion for drink; of her parents' deaths, and little Jeannot, and so forth. And Mrs. Bagot was much moved and interested by these naive revelations, which accounted in a measure for so much that seemed unaccountable in this extraordinary woman; who thus turned out to be a kind of cousin (though on the wrong side of the blanket) to no less a person than the famous Duchess of Towers.

With what joy would that ever kind and gracious lady have taken poor Trilby to her bosom had she only known! She had once been all the way from Paris to Vienna merely to hear her sing. But, unfortunately, the Svengalis had just left for St. Petersburg, and she had her long journey for nothing!

Mrs. Bagot brought her many good books, and read them to her—Dr. Cumming's on the approaching end of the world, and other works of a like comforting tendency for those who are just about to leave it; the *Pilgrim's Progress*, sweet little tracts, and what not.

Trilby was so grateful that she listened with much patient attention. Only now and then a faint gleam of amusement would steal over

her face, and her lips would almost form themselves to ejaculate, 'Oh, maie, aie!'

Then Mrs. Bagot, as a reward for such winning docility, would read her *David Copperfield*, and that was heavenly indeed!

But the best of all was for Trilby to look over John Leech's *Pictures of Life and Character*, just out. She had never seen any drawings of Leech before, except now and then in an occasional *Punch* that turned up in the studio in Paris. And they never palled upon her, and taught her more of the aspect of English life (the life she loved) than any book she had ever read. She laughed and laughed; and it was almost as sweet to listen to as if she were vocalising the quick part in Chopin's *Impromptu*.

One day she said, her lips trembling: 'I can't make out why you're so wonderfully kind to me, Mrs. Bagot. I hope you have not forgotten who and what I am, and what my story is. I hope you haven't forgotten that I'm not a respectable woman?'

'Oh, my dear child—don't ask me.... I only know that you are you!... and I am I! and that is enough for me.... you're my poor, gentle, patient, suffering daughter, whatever else you are—more sinned against than sinning, I feel sure! But there.... I've misjudged you so, and been so unjust, that I would give worlds to make you some amends.... besides, I should be just as fond of you if you'd committed a murder, I really believe—you're so strange! you're irresistible! Did you ever, in all your life, meet anybody that *wasn't* fond of you?'

Trilby's eyes moistened with tender pleasure at such a pretty compliment. Then, after a few minutes' thought, she said, with engaging candour and quite simply: 'No, I can't say I ever did, that I can think of just now. But I've forgotten such lots of people!'

One day Mrs. Bagot told Trilby that her brother-in-law, Mr. Thomas Bagot, would much like to come and talk to her.

'Was that the gentleman who came with you to the studio in Paris?'

'Yes.'

'Why, he's a clergyman, isn't he? What does he want to come and talk to *me* about?'

'Ah! my dear child....' said Mrs. Bagot, her eyes filling.

Trilby was thoughtful for a while, and then said: 'I'm going to die, I suppose. Oh yes! oh yes! There's no mistake about that!'

'Dear Trilby, we are all in the hands of an Almighty Merciful God!' And the tears rolled down Mrs. Bagot's cheeks.

After a long pause, during which she gazed out of the window, Trilby said, in an abstracted kind of way, as though she were talking to herself: 'Après tout, c'est pas déjà si raide, de claquer! J'en ai tant vus, qui ont passé par là! Au bout du fossé là culbute, ma foi!'

'What are you saying to yourself in French, Trilby? Your French is so difficult to understand!'

'Oh, I beg your pardon! I was thinking it's not so difficult to die,

after all! I've seen such lots of people do it. I've nursed them, you know—papa and mamma and Jeannot, and Angèle Boisse's mother-in-law, and a poor *casseur de pierres*, Colin Maigret, who lived in the Impasse des Taupes St. Germain. He'd been run over by an omnibus in the Rue Vaugirard, and had to have both his legs cut off just above the knee. They none of them seemed to mind dying a bit. They weren't a bit afraid! *I'm not!*

'Poor people don't think much of death. Rich people shouldn't either. They should be taught when they're quite young to laugh at it and despise it, like the Chinese. The Chinese die of laughing just as their heads are being cut off, and cheat the executioner! It's all in the day's work, and we're all in the same boat—so who's afraid!'

'Dying is not all, my poor child! Are you prepared to meet your Maker face to face? Have you ever thought about God, and the possible wrath to come if you should die unrepentant?'

'Oh, but I sha'n't! I've been repenting all my life! Besides, there'll be no wrath for any of us—not even the worst! *Il y aura amnistie générale!* Papa told me so, and he'd been a clergyman, like Mr. Thomas Bagot. I often think about God. I'm very fond of Him. One *must* have something perfect to look up to and be fond of—even if it's only an idea! even if it's too good to be true!

'Though some people don't even believe He exists! Le père Martin didn't—but, of course, *he* was only a *chiffonnier*, and doesn't count.

'One day, though, Durien, the sculptor, who's very clever, and a very good fellow indeed, said:

"Vois-tu, Trilby—I'm very much afraid He doesn't really exist, le bon Dieu! most unfortunately for me, for I *adore* Him! I never do a piece of work without thinking how nice it would be if I could only please *Him* with it!"

'And I've often thought, myself, how heavenly it must be to be able to paint, or sculpt, or make music, or write beautiful poetry, for that very reason!

'Why, once on a very hot afternoon we were sitting, a lot of us, in the court-yard outside la mère Martin's shop, drinking coffee with an old Invalidé called Bastide Lendormi, one of the Vieille Garde, who'd only got one leg and one arm and one eye, and everybody was very fond of him. Well, a model called Mimi la Salope came out of the Mont-de-piété opposite, and Père Martin called out to her to come and sit down, and gave her a cup of coffee, and asked her to sing.

'She sang a song of Béranger's about Napoleon the Great, in which it says—

"Parlez-nous de lui, grandmère!
Grandmère, parlez-nous de lui!"

I suppose she sang it very well, for it made old Bastide Lendormi cry; and when Père Martin *blagué'd* him about it, he said—

“‘C'est égal, voyez-vous! to sing like that is to pray!’”

‘And then I thought how lovely it would be if *I* could only sing like Mimi la Salope, and I've thought so ever since—just to pray!’

‘What! Trilby? if *you* could only sing like—— Oh, but never mind, I forgot! Tell me, Trilby—do you ever pray to Him, as other people pray?’

‘Pray to Him? Well, no—not often—not in words and on my knees and with my hands together, you know! *Thinking's* praying, very often—don't you think so? And so's being sorry and ashamed when one's done a mean thing, and glad when one's resisted a



“‘TO SING LIKE THAT IS TO PRAY!’”

temptation, and grateful when it's a fine day and one's enjoying one's self without hurting any one else! What is it but praying when you try and bear up after losing all you cared to live for? And very good praying too! There can be prayers without words just as well as songs, I suppose; and Svengali used to say that songs without words are the best!

‘And then it seems mean to be always asking for things. Besides you don't get them any the faster that way, and that shows!’

‘La mère Martin used to be always praying. And Père Martin used always to laugh at her; yet he always seemed to get the things *he* wanted oftenest!’

‘I prayed once, very hard indeed! I prayed for Jeannot not to die!’

‘Well—but how do you *repent*, Trilby, if you do not humble yourself, and pray for forgiveness on your knees?’

'Oh, well—I don't exactly know! Look here, Mrs. Bagot, I'll tell you the lowest and meanest thing I ever did.'

(Mrs. Bagot felt a little nervous.)

'I'd promised to take Jeannot on Palm-Sunday to St. Philippe du Roule, to hear l'abbé Bergamot. But Durien (that's the sculptor, you know) asked me to go with him to St. Germain, where there was a fair, or something; and with Mathieu, who was a student in law; and a certain Victorine Letellier, who—who was Mathieu's mistress, in fact—a lace-mender in the Rue Ste. Maritorne la Pocharde. And so I went on Sunday morning to tell Jeannot that I couldn't take him.

'He cried so dreadfully that I thought I'd give up the others and take him to St. Philippe, as I'd promised. But then Durien and Mathieu and Victorine drove up and waited outside, and so I *didn't* take him, and went with them, and I didn't enjoy anything all day, and was miserable.

'They were in an open carriage with two horses; it was Mathieu's treat, and Jeannot might have ridden on the box by the coachman without being in anybody's way. But I was afraid they didn't want him, as they didn't say anything, and so I didn't dare ask—and Jeannot saw us drive away, and I *couldn't* look back! And the worst of it is that when we were half-way to St. Germain, Durien said, "What a pity you didn't bring Jeannot!" and they were all sorry I hadn't.

'It was six or seven years ago, and I really believe I've thought of it every day, and sometimes in the middle of the night!

'Ah! and when Jeannot was dying! and when he was dead—the remembrance of that Palm-Sunday!

'And if *that's* not repenting, I don't know what is!

'Oh, Trilby, what nonsense! *that's* nothing; good heavens!—putting off a small child! I'm thinking of far worse things—when you were in the Quartier Latin, you know—sitting to painters and sculptors. Surely, so attractive as you are.'

'Oh yes. I know what you mean—it was horrid, and I was frightfully ashamed of myself; and it wasn't amusing a bit; *nothing* was, till I met your son and Taffy and dear Sandy M'Allister! But then it wasn't deceiving or disappointing anybody, or hurting their feelings—it was only hurting myself!

'Besides, all that sort of thing, in woman, is punished severely enough down here, God knows! unless one's a Russian empress like Catherine the Great, or a grande dame like lots of them, or a great genius like Madame Rachel or Georges Sand!

'Why, if it hadn't been for that, and sitting for the figure, I should have felt myself good enough to marry your son, *although* I was only a *blanchisseuse de fin*—you've said so yourself!

'And I should have made him a good wife—of that I feel sure. He wanted to live all his life at Barbizon, and paint, you know; and didn't care for society in the least. Anyhow, I should have been

equal to such a life as that! Lots of their wives are *blanchisseuses* over there or people of that sort; and they get on very well indeed, and nobody troubles about it!

'So I think I've been pretty well punished—richly as I've deserved to!'

'Trilby, have you ever been confirmed?'

'I forget. I fancy not!'

'Oh dear, oh dear! And do you know about our blessed Saviour, and the Atonement and the Incarnation and the Resurrection.....'



'THE REMEMBRANCE OF THAT PALM-SUNDAY!'

'Oh yes—I *used* to, at least. I used to have to learn the Catechism on Sundays—mamma made me. Whatever her faults and mistakes were, poor mamma was a'ways very particular about *that*! It all seemed very complicated. But papa told me not to bother too much about it, but to be good. He said that God would make it all right for us somehow, in the end—all of us. And that seems sensible, *doesn't* it?'

'He told me to be good, and not to mind what priests and clergymen tell us. He'd been a clergyman himself, and knew all about it, he said.'

'I haven't been very good—there's not much doubt about that, I'm afraid! But God knows I've repented often enough and sore

enough; I do now! But I'm rather glad to die, I think; and not a bit afraid—not a scrap! I believe in poor papa, though he was so unfortunate! He was the cleverest man I ever knew, and the best—except Taffy and the Laird and your dear son!

'There'll be no hell for any of us—he told me so—expect what we make for ourselves and each other down here; and that's bad enough for anything. He told me that *he* was responsible for me—he often said so—and that mamma was too, and his parents for *him*, and his grandfathers and grandmothers for *them*, and so on up to Noah and ever so far beyond, and God for us all!

'He told me always to think of other people before myself; as Taffy does, and your son; and never to tell lies or be afraid, and keep away from drink, and I should be all right. But I've sometimes been all wrong, all the same; and it wasn't papa's fault, but poor mamma's and mine; and I've known it, and been miserable at the time, and after! and I'm sure to be forgiven—perfectly certain—and so will everybody else, even the wickedest that ever lived! Why, just give them sense enough in the next world to understand all their wickedness in this, and that'll punish them enough for anything, I think! That's simple enough, *isn't it*? Besides, there may be *no* next world—that's on the cards too, you know!—and that will be simpler still!

'Not all the clergymen in all the world, not even the Pope of Rome, will ever make me doubt papa, or believe in any punishment after what we've all got to go through here. *Ce serait trop bête!*

'So that if you don't want me to very much, and he won't think it unkind, I'd rather not talk to Mr. Thomas Bagot about it. I'd rather talk to Taffy if I *must*. He's very clever, Taffy, though he doesn't often say such clever things as your son does, or paint nearly so well; and I'm sure he'll think papa was right.'

And as a matter of fact the good Taffy, in his opinion on this solemn subject, was found to be at one with the late Reverend Patrick Michael O'Ferrall—and so was the Laird—and so (to his mother's shocked and pained surprise) was Little Billee.

And so were Sir Oliver Calthorpe and Sir Jakes (then Mr.) Talboys and Doctor Thorne and Antony and Lorrimer and the Greek!

And so—in after-years, when grief had well pierced and torn and riddled her through and through, and time and age had healed the wounds, and nothing remained but the consciousness of great inward scars of recollection to remind her how deep and jagged and wide the wounds had once been—did Mrs. Bagot herself!

Late on one memorable Saturday afternoon, just as it was getting dusk in Charlotte Street, Trilby, in her pretty blue dressing-gown, lay on the sofa by the fire—her head well propped, her knees drawn up—looking very placid and content.

She had spent the early part of the day dictating her will to the conscientious Taffy.

It was a simple document, although she was not without many valuable trinkets to leave: quite a fortune! Souvenirs from many men and women she had charmed by her singing, from royalties downward.

She had been looking them over with the faithful Marta, to whom she had always thought they belonged. It was explained to her that they were gifts of Svengali's; since she did not remember when and where and by whom they were presented to her, except



FOR GECKO

a few that Svengali had given her himself, with many passionate expressions of his love, which seems to have been deep and constant and sincere; none the less so, perhaps, that she could never return it'

She had left the bulk of these to the faithful Marta.

But to each of the *trois Angliches* she had bequeathed a beautiful ring, which was to be worn by their brides if they ever married, and the brides didn't object.

To Mrs. Bagot she left a pearl necklace, to Miss Bagot her gold coronet of stars; and pretty (and most costly) gifts to each of the three doctors who had attended her and been so assiduous in their care; and who, as she was told, would make no charge for attending on Madame Svengali. And studs and scarf-pins to Antony, Lorrimer, the Greek, Dodor, and Zouzou; and to Carnegie a little German-silver vinaigrette which had once belonged to Lord Witlow; and

pretty souvenirs to the Vinards, Angèle Boisse, Durien, and others.

And she left a magnificent gold watch and chain to Gecko, with a most affectionate letter and a hundred pounds—which was all she had in money of her own.

She had taken great interest in discussing with Taffy the particular kind of trinket which would best suit the idiosyncrasy of each particular legatee, and derived great comfort from the business-like and sympathetic conscientiousness with which the good Taffy entered upon all these minutiae—he was so solemn and serious about it, and took such pains. She little guessed how his dumb but deeply feeling heart was harrowed.

This document had been duly signed and witnessed and entrusted to his care; and Trilby lay tranquil and happy, and with a sense that nothing remained for her but to enjoy the fleeting hour, and make the most of each precious moment as it went by.

She was quite without pain of either mind or body, and surrounded by the people she adored—Taffy, the Laird, and Little Billee, and Mrs. Bagot, and Marta, who sat knitting in a corner with her black mittens on, and her brass spectacles.

She listened to the chat and joined in it, laughing as usual; 'love in her eyes sat playing' as she looked from one to another, for she loved them all beyond expression. 'Love on her lips was straying, and warbling in her breath,' whenever she spoke; and her weakened voice was still larger, fuller, softer than any other voice in the room, in the world—of another kind, from another sphere.

A cart drove up, there was a ring at the door, and presently a wooden packing-case was brought into the room.

At Trilby's request it was opened, and found to contain a large photograph, framed and glazed, of Svengali, in the military uniform of his own Hungarian band (which he had always worn until he came to Paris and London, where he conducted in ordinary evening dress) and looking straight out of the picture, straight at you. He was standing by his desk with his left hand turning over a leaf of music, and waiving his bâton with his right. It was a splendid photograph by a Viennese photographer, and a most speaking likeness; and Svengali looked truly fine—all made up of importance and authority, and his big black eyes were full of stern command.

Marta trembled as she looked. It was handed to Trilby, who exclaimed in surprise. She had never seen it. She had no photograph of him, and had never possessed one.

No message of any kind, no letter of explanation, accompanied this unexpected present, which, from the postmarks on the case, seemed to have travelled all over Europe to London, out of some remote province in eastern Russia—out of the mysterious East! The poisonous East—birthplace and home of an ill wind that blows nobody good.

Trilby laid it against her legs as on a lectern, and lay gazing at it with close attention for a long time, making a casual remark now

and then, as, 'He was very handsome, I think'; or, 'That uniform becomes him very well. Why has he got it on, I wonder?'

The others went on talking, and Mrs. Bagot made coffee.

Presently Mrs. Bagot took a cup of coffee to Trilby, and found her still staring intently at the portrait, but with her eyes dilated and quite a strange light in them.

'Trilby, Trilby, your coffee! What is the matter Trilby?'

Trilby was smiling, with fixed eyes, and made no answer.

The others got up and gathered round her in some alarm. Marta seemed terror-stricken, and wished to snatch the photograph away, but was prevented from doing so; one didn't know what the consequences might be.

Taffy rang the bell, and sent a servant for Dr. Thorne, who lived close by, in Fitzroy Square.

Presently Trilby began to speak, quite softly, in French: 'Encore une fois? bon! je veux bien! avec la voix blanche alors, n'est-ce pas? et puis foncer au milieu. Et pas trop vite en commençant! Battez bien la mesure, Svengali—que je puisse bien voir—car il fait déjà nuit! c'est ça! Allons, Gecko—donne-moi le ton!'

Then she smiled, and seemed to beat time softly by moving her head a little from side to side, her eyes intent on Svengali's in the portrait, and suddenly she began to sing Chopin's Impromptu in A flat.

She hardly seemed to breathe as the notes came pouring out, without words—mere vocalising. It was as if breath were unnecessary for so little voice as she was using, though there was enough of it to fill the room—to fill the house—to drown her small audience in holy, heavenly sweetness.

She was a consummate mistress of her art. How that could be seen! And also how splendid had been her training. It all seemed as easy to her as opening and shutting her eyes, and yet how utterly impossible to anybody else!

Between wonder, enchantment, and alarm they were frozen to statues—all except Marta, who ran out of the room crying, 'Gott im Himmel! wieder zurück! wieder zurück!'

She sang it just as she had sung it at the Salle des Bashibazoucks, only it sounded still more ineffably seductive, as she was using less voice—using the essence of her voice in fact—the pure spirit, the very cream of it.

There can be little doubt that these four watchers by that enchanted couch were listening to not only the most divinely beautiful, but also the most astounding feat of musical utterance ever heard out of a human throat.

The usual effect was produced. Tears were streaming down the cheeks of Mrs. Bagot and Little Billee. Tears were in the Laird's eyes, a tear on one of Taffy's whiskers—tears of sheer delight.

When she came back to the quick movement again, after the adagio, her voice grew louder and shriller, and sweet with a sweetness

not of this earth; and went on increasing in volume as she quickened the time, nearing the end; and then came the dying away into all but nothing—a mere melodic breath; and then the little soft chromatic ascending rocket, up to E in alt, the last parting caress (which Svengali had introduced as a finale, for it does not exist in the piano score).

When it was over, she said: 'Ça y est-il, cette fois, Svengali? Ah! tant mieux, à la fin! c'est pas malheureux! Et maintenant, mon ami, je suis fatiguée—bon soir!'

Her head fell back on the pillow, and she lay fast asleep.



" 'SVENGALI!.... SVENGALI!.... SVENGALI!....' "

Mrs. Bagot took the portrait away gently. Little Billee knelt down and held Trilby's hand in his and felt for her pulse, and could not find it.

He said, 'Trilby! Trilby!' and put his ear to her mouth to hear her breathe. Her breath was inaudible.

But soon she folded her hands across her breast, and uttered a little short sigh, and in a weak voice said: '*Svengali Svengali.... Svengali*'

They remained in silence round her for several minutes, terror-stricken.

The doctor came; he put his hand to her heart, his ear to her

lips. He turned up one of her eyelids and looked at her eye. And then, his voice quivering with strong emotion, he stood up and said, 'Madame Svengali's trials and sufferings are all over!'

'Oh, good God! is she *dead*?' cried Mrs. Bagot.

'Yes, Mrs. Bagot. She has been dead several minutes—perhaps a quarter of an hour.'

VINGT ANS APRÈS

Porthos-Athos, *alias* Taffy Wynne, is sitting to breakfast (opposite his wife) at a little table in the courtyard of that huge caravansérail on the Boulevard des Capucines, Paris, where he had sat more than twenty years ago with the Laird and Little Billee; where, in fact, he had pulled Svengali's nose.

Little is changed in the aspect of the place: the same cosmopolite company, with more of the American element, perhaps; the same arrivals and departures in railway omnibuses, cabs, hired carriages; and, airing his calves on the marble steps, stood just such another colossal and beautiful old man in black cloth coat and knee-breeches and silk stockings as of yore, with probably the very same pinchbeck chain. Where do they breed these magnificent old Frenchmen? In Germany, perhaps, 'where all the good big waiters come from!'

And also the same fine weather. It is always fine weather in the courtyard of the Grand Hôtel. As the Laird would say, they manage these things better there!

Taffy wears a short beard, which is turning gray. His kind blue eye is no longer choleric, but mild and friendly—as frank as ever; and full of humorous patience. He has grown stouter; he is very big indeed, in all three dimensions, but the symmetry and the gainliness of the athlete belong to him still in movement and repose; and his clothes fit him beautifully, though they are not new, and show careful beating and brushing and ironing, and even a faint suspicion of all but imperceptible fine-drawing here and there.

What a magnificent old man *he* will make some day, should the Grand Hôtel ever run short of them! He looks as if he could be trusted down to the ground—in all things, little or big; as if his word were as good as his bond, and even better; his wink as good as his word, his nod as good as his wink; and, in truth, as he looks, so he is.

The most cynical disbeliever in 'the grand old name of gentleman,' and its virtues as a noun of definition, would almost be justified in quite dogmatically asserting at sight, and without even being introduced, that, at all events, Taffy is a 'gentleman,' inside and out, up and down—from the crown of his head (which is getting rather bald) to the sole of his foot (by no means a small one, or a lightly shod—*ex pede Herculem*)!

Indeed, this is always the first thing people say of Taffy—and the last. It means, perhaps, that he may be a trifle dull. Well, one can't be everything!

Porthos was a trifle dull—and so was Athos, I think; and likewise his son, the faithful Viscount of Bragelonne—*bon chien chasse de race!* And so was Wilfred of Ivanhoe, the disinherited; and Edgar, the Lord of Ravenswood! and so, for that matter, was Colonel Newcome, of immortal memory!

Yet who does not love them—who would not wish to be like them, for better, for worse!

Taffy's wife is unlike Taffy in many ways; but (fortunately for both) very like him in some. She is a little woman, very well shaped, very dark, with black, wavy hair, and very small hands and feet;



'TOUT VIENT À POINT, À QUI SAIT ATTENDRE'

a very graceful, handsome, and vivacious person; by no means dull; full, indeed, of quick perceptions and intuitions; deeply interested in all that is going on about and around her, and with always lots to say about it, but not too much.

She distinctly belongs to the rare, and ever-blessed, and most precious race of charmers.

She had fallen in love with the stalwart Taffy more than a quarter of a century ago in the Place St. Anatole des Arts, where he and she and her mother had tended the sick couch of Little Billee—but she had never told her love. *Tout vient à point, à qui sait attendre!*

That is a capital proverb, and sometimes even a true one. Blanche Bagot had found it to be both!

One terrible night, never to be forgotten, Taffy lay fast asleep in bed, at his rooms in Jermyn Street, for he was very tired; grief tires more than anything, and brings a deeper slumber.

That day he had followed Trilby to her last home in Kensal Green, with Little Billee, Mrs. Bagot, the Laird, Antony, the Greek, and Durien (who had come over from Paris on purpose) as chief mourners; and many other people, noble, famous, or otherwise, English and foreign; a splendid and most representative gathering, as was duly chronicled in all the newspapers here and abroad; a fitting ceremony to close the brief but splendid career of the greatest pleasure-giver of our time.

He was awakened by a tremendous ringing at the street-door bell, as if the house were on fire; and then there was a hurried scrambling up in the dark, a tumbling over stairs and kicking against banisters, and Little Billee had burst into his room, calling out: 'Oh! Taffy, Taffy! I'm g-going mad—I'm g-going m-mad! I'm d-d-done for....'

'All right, old fellow—just wait till I strike a light!'

'Oh, Taffy! I haven't slept for four nights—not a wink! She d-d-died with Sv—Sv—Sv....damn it, I can't get it out! that ruffian's name on her lips!....it was just as if he were calling her from the t-t-tomb! She recovered her senses the very minute she saw his photograph—she was so f-fond of him she f-forgot everybody else! She's gone straight to him, after all—in some other life!.... to slave for him, and sing for him, and help him to make better music than ever! Oh, T—T—oh—oh! Taffy—oh! oh! catch hold! c-c-catch...' And Little Billee had all but fallen on the floor in a fit.

And all the old miserable business of five years before had begun over again!

There has been too much sickness in this story, so I will tell as little as possible of poor Little Billee's long illness, his slow and only partial recovery, the paralysis of his powers as a painter, his quick decline, his early death, his manly, calm, and most beautiful surrender—the wedding of the moth with the star, of the night with the morrow!

For all but blameless as his short life had been, and so full of splendid promise and performance, nothing ever became him better than the way he left it. It was as if he were starting on some distant holy quest, like some gallant knight of old—'A Bagot to the rescue!' in another life. It shook the infallibility of a certain vicar down to its very foundations, and made him think more deeply about things than he had ever thought yet. It gave him pause! ... and so wrung his heart that when, at the last, he stooped to kiss his poor young dead friend's pure white forehead, he dropped a bigger tear on it

than Little Billee (once so given to the dropping of big tears) had ever dropped in his life.

But it is all too sad to write about.

It was by Little Billee's bedside, in Devonshire, that Taffy had grown to love Blanche Bagot, and not very many weeks after it was all over that Taffy had asked her to be his wife; and in a year they were married, and a very happy marriage it turned out—the one



'I, PETE COELESSES....

thing that poor Mrs. Bagot still looks upon as a compensation for all the griefs and troubles of her life.

During the first year or two Blanche had perhaps been the more ardently loving of this well-assorted pair. That beautiful look of love surprised (which makes all women's eyes look the same) came into hers whenever she looked at Taffy, and filled his heart with tender compunction, and a queer sense of his own unworthiness.

Then a boy was born to them, and that look fell on the boy, and the good Taffy caught it as it passed him by, and he felt a helpless absurd jealousy, that was none the less painful for being so ridiculous!

and then that look fell on another boy, and yet another, so that it was through these boys that she looked at their father. Then his eyes caught the look, and kept it for their own use; and he grew never to look at his wife without it; and as no daughter came, she retained for life the monopoly of that most sweet and expressive regard.

They are not very rich. He is a far better sportsman than he will ever be a painter; and if he doesn't sell his pictures, it is not because they are too good for the public taste: indeed, he has no illusions on that score himself, even if his wife has! He is quite the least conceited art-duffer I ever met—and I have met many far worse duffers than Taffy.

Would only that I might kill off his cousin Sir Oscar, and Sir Oscar's five sons (the Wynnes are good at sons), and his seventeen grandsons, and the fourteen cousins (and their numerous male progeny), that stand between Taffy and the baronetcy, and whatever property goes with it; so that he might be Sir Taffy, and dear Blanche Bagot (that was) might be called 'my lady'! This Shakespearian holocaust would scarcely cost me a pang!

It is a great temptation, when you have duly slain your first hero, to enrich hero number two beyond the dreams of avarice, and provide him with a title and a castle and park, as well as a handsome wife and a nice family! But truth is inexorable—and, besides, they are just as happy as they are.

They are well off enough, anyhow, to spend a week in Paris at last, and even to stop at the Grand Hôtel! now that two of their sons are at Harrow (where their father was before them), and the third is safe at a preparatory school at Elstree, Herts.

It is their first outing since the honeymoon and the Laird should have come with them.

But the good Laird of Cockpen (who is now a famous Royal Academician) is preparing for a honeymoon of his own. He has gone to Scotland to be married himself—to wed a fair and clever countrywoman of just a suitable age, for he has known her ever since she was a bright little lassie in short frocks, and he a promising A.R.A. (the pride of his native Dundee)—a marriage of reason, and well-seasoned affection, and mutual esteem—and therefore sure to turn out a happy one! and in another fortnight or so the pair of them will very possibly be sitting to breakfast opposite each other at that very corner table in the courtyard of the Grand Hôtel! and she will laugh at everything he says—and they will live happily ever after.

So much for hero number three—D'Artagnan? Here's to you, Sandy M'Allister, canniest, genialest, and most humorous of Scots! most delicate, and dainty, and fanciful of British painters? 'I think your health, mit your family's—may you lif long—and prosper!'

So Taffy and his wife have come for their second honeymoon, their Indian-summer honeymoon, alone; and are well content that

it should be so. Two's always company for such a pair—the amusing one and the amusable!—and they are making the most of it!

They have been all over the Quartier Latin, and revisited the well-remembered spots; and even been allowed to enter the old studio, through the kindness of the *concierge* (who is no longer Madame Vinard). It is tenanted by two American painters, who are coldly civil on being thus disturbed in the middle of their work.

The studio is very spick and span, and most respectable. Trilby's foot, and the poem, and the sheet of plateglass have been improved away, and a bookshelf put in their place. The new *concierge* (who has only been there a year) knows nothing of Trilby; and of the Vinards, only that they are rich and prosperous, and live somewhere in the south of France, and that Monsieur Vinard is mayor of his commune. *Que le bon Dieu les bénisse! C'étaient de bien braves gens.*

Then Mr. and Mrs. Taffy have also been driven (in an open *calèche* with two horses, through the Bois de Boulogne to St. Cloud and to Versailles, where they lunched at the Hôtel des Réservoirs—*parlez-moi de ça!* and to St. Germain, and to Meudon (where they lunched at *la loge du garde champêtre*—a new one); they have visited the Salon, the Louvre, the porcelain manufactory at Sèvres, the Gobelins, the Hôtel Cluny, the Invalides, with Napoleon's tomb; and seen half a dozen churches, including Notre Dame and the Sainte Chapelle; and dined with the Dodors at their charming villa near Asnières, and with the Zouzous at the splendid Hotel de la Rochemartel, and with the Duriens in the Parc Monceau (Dodor's food was best and Zouzou's worst; and at Durien's the company and talk were so good that one forgot to notice the food—and that was a pity). And the young Dodors are all right—and so are the young Duriens. As for the young Zouzous, there aren't any—and *that's* a weight off one's mind!

And they've been to the Variétés and seen Madame Chaumont, and to the Français and seen Sarah Bernhardt and Coquelin and Delaunay, and to the Opéra and heard Monsieur Lassalle.

And to-day being their last day, they are going to laze and flane about the boulevards, and buy things, and lunch anywhere, *sur le pouce*, and do the Bois once more and see *tout* Paris, and dine early at Durand's, or Bignon's (or else the Café des Ambassadeurs), and finish up the well-spent day at the 'Mouches d'Espagne'—the new theatre in the Boulevard Poissonnière—to see Madame Cantharidi in 'Petits Bonheurs de Contrebande', which they are told is immensely droll and quite proper—funny without being vulgar! Dodor was their informant—he had taken Madame Dodor to see it three or four times.

Madame Cantharidi, as everybody knows, is a very clever but extremely plain old woman with a cracked voice—of spotless reputation, and the irreproachable mother of a grown-up family whom she has brought up in perfection. They have never been allowed to see their mother (and grandmother) act—not even the

sons. Their excellent father (who adores both them and her) has drawn the line at that!

In private life she is 'quite the lady,' but on the stage—well, go and you will understand how she comes to be the idol of the Parisian public. For she is the true and liberal dispenser to them of that modern *esprit gaulois* which would make the good Rabelais turn uneasily in his grave and blush there like a Benedictine Sister.

And truly she deserves the reverential love and gratitude of her *chers Parisiens*! She amused them all through the Empire; during the *année terrible* she was their only stay and comfort, and has been their chief delight ever since, and is now.

When they come back from *La Revanche*, may Madame Cantharidi be still at her post, 'Les mouches d'Espagne,' to welcome the returning heroes, and exult and crow with them in her funny cracked old voice; or, haply, even console them once more, as the case may be.

'Victors or vanquished, they will laugh the same!'

Mrs. Taffy is a poor French scholar. One must know French very well indeed (and many other things besides) to seize the subtle points of Madame Cantharidi's play (and by-play)!

But Madame Cantharidi has so droll a face and voice, and such very droll, odd movements, that Mrs. Taffy goes into fits of laughter as soon as the quaint little old lady comes on the stage. So heartily does she laugh that a good Parisian bourgeois turns round and remarks to his wife: 'V'là une jolie p'tite Anglaise qui n'est pas bégueule, au moins! Et l' gros boeuf avec les yeux bleus en boules de loto—c'est son mari, sans doute! il n'a pas l'air trop content par exemple, celui-là!'

The fact is that the good Taffy (who knows French very well indeed) is quite scandalised and very angry with Dodor for sending them there; and as soon as the first act is finished he means, without any fuss, to take his wife away.

As he sits patiently, too indignant to laugh at what is really funny in the piece (much of it is vulgar *without* being funny), he finds himself watching a little white-haired man in the orchestra, a fiddler, the shape of whose back seems somehow familiar, as he plays an *obbligato* accompaniment to a very broadly comic song of Madame Cantharidi's. He plays beautifully—like a master—and the loud applause is as much for him as for the vocalist.

Presently this fiddler turns his head so that his profile can be seen, and Taffy recognises him.

After five minutes' thought, Taffy takes a leaf out of his pocket-book and writes (in perfectly grammatical French):—

'DEAR GECKO—You have not forgotten Taffy Wynne, I hope; and Litrebili, and Litrebili's sister, who is now Mrs. Taffy Wynne. We leave Paris to-morrow, and would like very much to see you once more. Will you, after the play, come and sup with us at the

Café Anglais? If so, look up and make "yes" with the head, and enchant—Your well-devoted
Taffy Wynne'.

He gives this, folded, to an attendant—for 'le premier violon—celui qui a des cheveux blancs.'

Presently he sees Gecko receive the note and read it and ponder for a while.

Then Gecko looks round the theatre, and Taffy waves his handkerchief and catches the eye of the premier violon, who 'makes "yes" with the head.'

And then, the first act over, Mr. and Mrs. Wynne leave the theatre; Mr. explaining why, and Mrs. very ready to go, as she was beginning to feel strangely uncomfortable without quite realising as yet what was amiss with the lively Madame Cantharidi.

They went to the Café Anglais and bespoke a nice little room on the *entresol* overlooking the boulevard, and ordered a nice little supper; salmi of something very good, mayonnaise of lobster, and one or two other dishes better still—and chambertin of the best. Taffy was particular about these things on a holiday, and regardless of expense. Porthos was very hospitable, and liked good food and plenty of it; and Athos dearly loved good wine!

And then they went and sat at a little round table outside the Café de la Paix on the boulevard, near the Grand Opéra, where it is always very gay, and studied Paris life, and nursed their appetites till supper-time.

At half-past eleven Gecko made his appearance—very meek and humble. He looked old—ten years older than he really was—much bowed down, and as if he had roughed it all his life, and had found living a desperate long, hard grind.

He kissed Mrs. Taffy's hand, and seemed half inclined to kiss Taffy's too, and was almost tearful in his pleasure at meeting them again, and his gratitude at being asked to sup with them. He had soft, clinging, caressing manners, like a nice dog's that made you his friend at once. He was obviously genuine and sincere, and quite pathetically simple, as he always had been.

At first he could scarcely eat for nervous excitement; but Taffy's fine example and Mrs. Taffy's genial, easy-going cordiality (and a couple of glasses of chambertin) soon put him at his ease and woke up his dormant appetite, which was a very large one, poor fellow!

He was told all about Little Billee's death, and deeply moved to hear the cause which had brought it about, and then they talked of Trilby.

He pulled her watch out of his waistcoat-pocket and reverently kissed it, exclaiming: 'Ah! c'était un ange! un ange du Paradis! when I tell you I lived with them for five years! Oh! her kindness, Dio, Dio Maria! It was "Gecko this!" and "Gecko that!" and "Poor Gecko, your toothache, how it worries me!" and "Gecko, how tired and pale you look—you distress me so, looking like that! Shall I

mix you a maitrank?" And "Gecko, you love artichokes à la Barigoule; they remind you of Paris—I have heard you say so. Well, I have found out where to get artichokes, and I know how to do them à la Barigoule, and you shall have them for dinner to-day and to-morrow and all the week after!" and we did!

'Ach! dear kind one—what did I really care for artichokes à la Barigoule?...

'And it was always like that—always—and to Svengali and old Marta just the same! and she was never well—never! *toujours souffrante!*

'And it was she who supported us all—in luxury and splendour sometimes!'

'And *what* an artist!' said Taffy.

'Ah, yes! but all that was Svengali, you know. Svengali was the greatest artist I ever met! Monsieur, Svengali was a demon, a magician! I used to think him a god! He found me playing in the streets for copper coins, and took me by the hand, and was my only friend, and taught me all I ever knew—and yet he could not play my instrument!

'And now he is dead, I have forgotten how to play it myself! That English jail! it demoralised me, ruined me for ever! ach! quel enfer, nom de Dieu (pardon, madame)! I am just good enough to play the *obligato* at the Mouches d'Espagne, when the old Cantharidi sings,

'"*V*là mon mari qui r'garde!
Prends garde—ne m'chatouille plus!"'

'It does not want much of an *obligato*, *hein*, a song so noble and so beautiful as that!

'And that song, monsieur, all Paris is singing it now. And that is the Paris that went mad when Trilby sang the "Nussbaum" of Schumann at the Salle des Bashibazoucks. You heard her? Well!'

And here poor Gecko tried to laugh a little sardonic laugh in falsetto, like Svengali's, full of scorn and bitterness—and very nearly succeeded.

'But what made you strike him with—with that knife, you know?'

'Ah, monsieur, it had been coming on for a long time. He used to work Trilby too hard; it was killing her—it killed her at last! And then at the end he was unkind to her and scolded her and called her names—horrid names—and then one day in London he struck her. He struck her on the fingers with his bâton, and she fell down on her knees and cried. ...

'Monsieur, I would have defended Trilby against a locomotive going *grande vitesse!* against my own father—against the Emperor of Austria—against the Pope! and I am a good Catholic, monsieur! I would have gone to the scaffold for her, and to the devil after!'

And he piously crossed himself.

'But, Svengali—wasn't he very fond of her?'

'Oh yes, monsieur! *quant à ça*, passionately! But she did not love

him as he wished to be loved. She loved Litrebili, monsieur! Litrebili, the brother of madame. And I suppose that Svengali grew angry and jealous at last. He changed as soon as he came to Paris. Perhaps Paris reminded him of Litrebili—and reminded Trilby, too!

'But how on earth did Svengali ever manage to teach her how to sing like that? She had no ear for music whatever when we knew her!'

Gecko was silent for a while, and Taffy filled his glass, and gave him a cigar, and lit one himself.



“WE TOOK HER VOICE NOTE BY NOTE”

'Monsieur, no—that is true. She had not much ear. But she had such a voice as had never been heard. Svengali knew that. He had found it out long ago. Litolff had found it out, too. One day Svengali heard Litolff tell Meyerbeer that the most beautiful female voice in Europe belonged to an English grisette who sat as a model to sculptors in the Quartier Latin, but that unfortunately she was quite tone-deaf, and couldn't sing one single note in tune. Imagine how Svengali chuckled! I see it from here!

'Well, we both taught her together—for three years—morning, noon, and night—six—eight hours a day. It used to split me the heart to see her worked like that! We took her voice note by note

—there was no end to her notes, each more beautiful than the other—velvet and gold, beautiful flowers, pearls, diamonds, rubies—drops of dew and honey; peaches, oranges, and lemons! *en vertu en voilà!*—all the perfumes and spices of the Garden of Eden! Svengali with his little flexible flageolet, I with my violin—that is how we taught her to make the sounds—and then how to use them. She was a *phénomène monsieur!* She could keep on one note and make it go through all the colours in the rainbow—according to the way Svengali looked at her. It would make you laugh—it would make you cry—but, cry or laugh, it was the sweetest, the most touching, the most beautiful note you ever heard—except all her others! and each had as many overtones as the bells in the Carillon de Notre Dame. She could run up and down the scales, chromatic scales, quicker and better and smoother than Svengali on the piano, and more in tune than any piano! and her shake—*ach!* twin stars, monsieur! She was the greatest contralto, the greatest soprano the world has ever known! the like of her has never been! the like of her will never be again! and yet she only sang in public for two years!

'*Ach!* those breaks and runs and sudden leaps from darkness into light and back again—from earth to heaven!...those slurs and swoops and slides à la Paganini from one note to another, like a swallow flying!...or a gull! Do you remember them? how they drove you mad? Let any other singer in the world try to imitate them—they would make you sick! That was Svengali...he was a magician!

'And how she looked, singing! do you remember? her hands behind her—her dear, sweet, slender foot on a little stool—her thick hair lying down all along her back! And that good smile like the Madonna's, so soft and bright and kind! *Ach!* *Bel ucel di Dio!* it was to make you weep for love, merely to see her (*c'était à vous faire pleurer d'amour, rien que de la voir!*)! That was Trilby! Night-ingale and bird of paradise in one!

'*Enfin* she could do anything—utter any sound she liked, when once Svengali had shown her how—and he was the greatest master that ever lived! and when once she knew a thing, she knew it. *Et voilà!*'

'How strange,' said Taffy, 'that she should have suddenly gone out of her senses that night at Drury Lane, and so completely forgotten it all! I suppose she saw Svengali die in the box opposite, and that drove her mad!'

And then Taffy told the fiddler about Trilby's death-song, like a swan's and Svengali's photograph. But Gecko had heard it all from Marta, who was now dead.

Gecko sat and smoked and pondered for a while, and looked from one to the other. Then he pulled himself together with an effort, so to speak, and said, 'Monsieur, she never went mad—not for one moment!'

'What? Do mean to say she *deceived* us all?'

'Non, monsieur! She could never deceive anybody, and never would. *She had forgotten—voilà tout!*'

'But hang it all, my friend, one doesn't forget such a——'

'Monsieur, listen! She is dead. And Svengali is dead—and Marta also. And I have a good little malady that will kill me soon, *Gott sei dank*—and without much pain.

'I will tell you a secret.

'*There were two Trilbys.* There was the Trilby you knew, who could not sing one single note in tune. She was an angel of paradise. She is now! But she had no more idea of singing than I have of winning a steeple-chase at the croix de Berny. She could no more sing than a fiddle can pay itself! She could never tell one tune from another—one note from the next. Do you remember how she tried to sing "Ben Bolt" that day when she first came to the studio in the Place St. Anatole des Arts? It was droll, *hein? à boucher les oreilles!* Well, that was Trilby, your Trilby! that was my Trilby too—and I loved her as one loves an only love, an only sister, an only child—a gentle martyr on earth, a blessed saint in heaven! And that Trilby was enough for me!

'And that was the Trilby that loved your brother, madame—oh! but with all the love that was in her! He did not know what he had lost, your brother! Her love, it was immense, like her voice, and just as full of celestial sweetness and sympathy! She told me everything! *ce pauvre Litrebili, ce qu'il a perdu!*

'But all at once—pr-r-r-out! presto! *augenblick!*... with one wave of his hand over her—with one look of his eye—with a word—Svengali could turn her into the other Trilby, *his* Trilby—and make her do whatever he liked you might have run a red-hot needle into her and she would not have felt it.

'He had but to say "*Dors!*" and she suddenly became an unconscious Trilby of marble, who could produce wonderful sounds—just the sounds he wanted, and nothing else—and think his thoughts and wish his wishes—and love him at his bidding with a strange, unreal, factitious love.... just his own love for himself turned inside out—a *l'envers*—and reflected back on him, as from a mirror

.... *un écho, un simulacre, quoi! pas autre chose!* It was not worth having! I was not even jealous!

'Well, that was the Trilby he taught how to sing—and—and I helped him, God of heaven forgive me! That Trilby was just a singing-machine—an organ to play upon—an instrument of music—a Stradivarius—a flexible flageolet of flesh and blood—a voice, and nothing more—just the unconscious voice that Svengali sang with—for it takes two to sing like La Svengali, monsieur—the one who has got the voice, and the one who knows what to do with it. So that when you heard her sing the "Nussbaum," the "Impromptu," you heard Svengali singing with her voice, just as you hear Joachim play a *chaconne* of Bach with his fiddle! Herr Joachim's fiddle what does it know of Sebastian Bach?

and as for *chaconnes* *il s'en moque pas mal, ce fameux violon!*

'And our Trilby what did she know of Schumann, Chopin?—nothing at all! She mocked herself not badly of Nussbaums and Impromptus they would make her yawn to demantibulate her jaws! When Svengali's Trilby was being taught to sing when Svengali's Trilby was singing—or seemed to *you* as if she were singing—our Trilby had ceased to exist *our* Trilby was fast asleep in fact, *our* Trilby was *dead*.



THE NIGHTINGALE'S FIRST SONG

'Ah, monsieur that Trilby of Svengali's! I have heard her sing to kings and queens in royal palaces! as no woman has ever sung before or since..... I have seen emperors and grand-dukes kiss her hand, monsieur—and their wives and daughters kiss her lips, and weep.

'I have seen the horses taken out of her sledge and the pick of the nobility drag her home to the hotel with torchlights and choruses and shoutings of glory and long life to her! and serenades all night, under her window! *she* never knew! she heard nothing—felt nothing—saw nothing! and she bowed to them, right and left, like a queen!

'I have played the fiddle for her while she sang in the streets, at fairs and festas and Kermessen.... and seen the people go mad to hear her... and once, at Prague, Svengali fell down in a fit from sheer excitement!

and then, suddenly, *our* Trilby woke up and wondered what it was all about and we took him home and put him to bed and left him with Marta—and Trilby and I went together arm-in-arm all over the town to fetch a doctor and buy things for supper—and that was the happiest hour in all my life!

'Ach! what an existence! what travels! what triumphs! what adventures! Things to fill a book—a dozen books— Those five happy years—with those two Trilby's! what recollections! I



‘“ICH HABE GELIEBT UND GELEBET!”’

think of nothing else, night or day even as I play the fiddle for old Cantharidi. *Ach!* To think how often I have played the fiddle for La Svengali to have done that is to have lived and then to come home to Trilby *our* Trilby the *real* Trilby! Gott sei dank! Ich habe *geliebt und gelebet!* *geliebt und gelebet!* *geliebt und gelebet!* Cristo di Dio Sweet sister in heaven Ô Dieu de Misère, ayez pitié de nous.'

His eyes were red, and his voice was high and shrill and tremulous and full of tears; these remembrances were too much for him; and perhaps also the chambertin! He put his elbows on the table and hid his face in his hands and wept, muttering to himself in his own

language (whatever that might have been—Polish, probably) as if he were praying.

Taffy and his wife got up and leaned on the window-bar and looked out on the deserted boulevards, where an army of scavengers, noiseless and taciturn, was cleansing the asphalt roadway. The night above was dark, but 'star-dials hinted of morn,' and a fresh breeze had sprung up, making the leaves dance and rustle on the sycamore trees along the boulevard—a nice little breeze; just the sort of little breeze to do Paris good. A four-wheel cab came by at a foot pace, the driver humming a tune; Taffy hailed him; he said, 'V'là m'sieur!' and drew up.

Taffy rang the bell, and asked for the bill, and paid it, Gecko had apparently fallen asleep. Taffy gently woke him up and told him how late it was. The poor little man seemed dazed and rather tipsy, and looked older than ever; sixty, seventy—any age you like. Taffy helped him on with his great-coat, and taking him by the arm, led him downstairs, giving him his card, and telling him how glad he was to have seen him, and that he would write to him from England—a promise that was kept, one may be sure.

Gecko uncovered his fuzzy white head, and took Mrs. Taffy's hand and kissed it, and thanked her warmly for her 'si bon et sympathique accueil.'

Then Taffy all but lifted him into the cab, the jolly cabman saying—

'Ah! bon—connais bien, celui là; vous savez—c'est lui qui joue du violon aux Mouches d'Espagne! Il a soupé, l'bourgeois; n'est-ce pas, m'sieur? "petits bonheurs de contrebande," hein? ayez pas peur! on vous aura soin de lui! il joue joliment bien, m'sieur; n'est-ce pas?'

Taffy shook Gecko's hand and asked,

'Où restez-vous Gecko?'

'Quarante-huit Rue des Pousse-cailloux, au cinquième.'

'How strange!' said Taffy to his wife—'how touching! why, that's where Trilby used to live—the very number! the very floor!'

'Oui, oui,' said Gecko, waking up; 'c'est l'ancienne mansarde à Trilby—j'y suis depuis douze ans—j'y suis, j'y reste. . .'

And he laughed feebly at his mild little joke.

Taffy told the address to the cabman, and gave him five francs.

'Merci, m'sieur! C'est de l'aut' côté de l'eau—près de la Sorbonne s'pas? On vous aura soin du bourgeois; soyez tranquille—ayez pas peur! quarante-huit; on y va. Bonsoir, monsieur et dame!' And he clacked his whip and rattled away, singing:—

'V'là mon mari qui r'garde—
Prends garde!
Ne m'chatouill' plus!'

Mr. and Mrs. Wynne walked back to the hotel, which was not far. She hung on to his big arm and crept close to him, and shivered

a little. It was quite chilly. Their footsteps were very audible in the stillness; 'pit-pat, floppety-clop,' otherwise they were both silent. They were tired, yawny, sleepy, and very sad; and each was thinking (and knew the other was thinking) that a week in Paris was just enough—and how nice it would be, in just a few hours more, to hear the rooks cawing round their own quiet little English country home—where three jolly boys would soon be coming for the holidays.

And there we will leave them to their useful, humdrum, happy domestic existence—than which there is no better that I know of, at their time of life—and no better time of life than theirs!

'Où peut-on être mieux qu'au sein de sa famille?'

That blessed harbour of refuge well within our reach, and having really cut our wisdom teeth at last, and learned the ropes, and left off hankering after the moon—we can do with so little down here. . . .

A little work a little play
To keep us going—and so, good-day!

A little warmth, a little light
Of love's bestowing—and so, good-night!

A little fun to match the sorrow
Of each day's growing—and so, good-morrow!

A little trust that when we die
We reap our sowing! And so—good-bye!

THE MARTIAN

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THE MARTIAN

"BARTY JOSSELIN IS NO MORE"

WHEN so great a man dies, it is generally found that a tangled growth of more or less contentious literature has already gathered round his name during his lifetime. He has been so written about, so talked about, so riddled with praise or blame, that, to those who have never seen him in the flesh, he has become almost a tradition, a myth—and one runs the risk of losing all clew to his real personality. This is especially the case with the subject of this biography—one is in danger of forgetting what manner of man he was who has so taught and touched and charmed and amused us, and so happily changed for us the current of our lives.

He has been idealised as an angel, a saint, and a demigod; he has been caricatured as a self-indulgent sensualist, a vulgar Lothario, a buffoon, a joker of practical jokes.

He was in reality the simplest, the most affectionate, and most good-natured of men, the very soul of honour, the best of husbands and fathers and friends, the most fascinating companion that ever lived, and one who kept to the last the freshness and joyous spirits of a schoolboy and the heart of a child; one who never said or did an unkind thing; probably never even thought one. Generous and open-handed to a fault, slow to condemn, quick to forgive, and gifted with a power of immediately inspiring affection and keeping it for ever after, such as I have never known in any one else, he grew to be (for all his quick-tempered impulsiveness) one of the gentlest and meekest and most humble-minded of men!

On me, a mere prosperous tradesman, and busy politician and man of the world, devolves the delicate and responsible task of being the first to write the life of the greatest literary genius this century has produced, *and of revealing the strange secret of that genius which* has lighted up the darkness of these latter times as with a pillar of fire by night.

This extraordinary secret has never been revealed before to any living soul but his wife and myself. And that is *one* of my qualifications for this great labour of love.

Another is that for fifty years I have known him as never a man can quite have known his fellow-man before—that for all that time he has been more constantly and devotedly loved by me than any man can ever quite have been loved by father, son, brother, or bosom friend.

Good heavens! Barty, man and boy, Barty's wife, their children, their grandchildren, and all that ever concerned them or concerns them still—all this has been the world to me, and ever will be.

He wished me to tell the *absolute truth* about him, just as I know it; and I look upon the fulfilment of this wish of his as a sacred trust, and would sooner die any shameful death or brave any other dishonour than fail in fulfilling it to the letter.

The responsibility before the world is appalling; and also the difficulty, to a man of such training as mine. I feel already conscious that I am trying to be literary myself, to seek for turns of phrase that I should never have dared to use in talking to Barty, or even in writing to him; that I am not at my ease, in short—not *me*—but straining every nerve to be on my best behaviour; and that's about the worst behaviour there is.

Oh, may some kindly light, born of a life's devotion and the happy memories of half a century, lead me to mere naturalness and the use of simple homely words, even my own native telegraphese! that I may haply blunder at length into some fit form of expression which Barty himself might have approved.

One would think that any sincere person who has learnt how to spell his own language should at least be equal to such a modest achievement as this; and yet it is one of the most difficult things in the world!

My life is so full of Barty Josselin that I can hardly be said to have ever had an existence apart from his; and I can think of no easier or better way to tell Barty's history than just telling my own—from the days I first knew him—and in my own way; that is, in the best telegraphese I can manage—picking each precious word with care, just or though I were going to cable it, as soon as written, to Boston or New York, where the love of Barty Josselin shines with even a brighter and warmer glow than here, or even in France; and where the hate of him, the hideous, odious odium theologicum—the *saeva indignatio* of the Church—that once burned at so white a heat, has burnt itself out at last, and is now as though it had never been, and never could be again.

P. S.—(an after-thought):—

And here, in case misfortune should happen to me before this book comes out as a volume, I wish to record my thanks to my old friend Mr. du Maurier for the readiness with which he has promised to undertake, and the conscientiousness with which he will have performed, his share of the work as editor and illustrator.

I also wish to state that it is to my beloved goddaughter, Roberta Beatrix Hay (née Josselin), that I dedicate this attempt at a biographical sketch of her illustrious father.

ROBERT MAURICE.

PART FIRST

"De Paris à Versailles, Ion, là,
De Paris à Versailles—
Il y a de belles allées,
Vive le Roi de France!
Il y a de belles allées,
Vivent les écoliers!"

ONE sultry Saturday afternoon in the summer of 1847, I sat at my desk in the junior school-room, or *salle d'études des petits*, of the Institution F. Brossard. Rond-point de l'Avenue de St.-Cloud; or, as it is called now, Avenue du Bois de Boulogne—or, as it was called during the Second Empire, Avenue du Prince Impérial, or else de l'Impératrice; I'm not sure.

There is not much stability in such French names, I fancy; but their sound is charming, and always gives me the nostalgia of Paris—Royal Paris, Imperial Paris, Republican Paris! . . . whatever they may call it ten or twelve years hence. Paris is always Paris, and always will be, in spite of the immortal Haussmann, both for those who love it and for those who don't.

All the four windows were open—two of them, freely and frankly, on to the now-deserted play-ground, admitting the fragrance of lime and syringa and lilac, and other odours of a mixed quality.

Two other windows, defended by an elaborate network of iron-wire and a formidable array of spiked iron rails beyond, opened on to the Rond-point, or meeting of the cross-roads—one of which led north-east to Paris through the Arc de Triomphe; the other three through woods and fields and country lanes to such quarters of the globe as still remain. The world is wide.

In the middle of this open space a stone fountain sent up a jet of water three feet high, which fell back with a feeble splash into the basin beneath. There was comfort in the sound on such a hot day, and one listened for it half unconsciously; and tried not to hear, instead, Weber's "Invitation à la Valse," which came rippling in intermittent waves from the open window of the distant *parloir*, where Chardonnet was practising the piano.

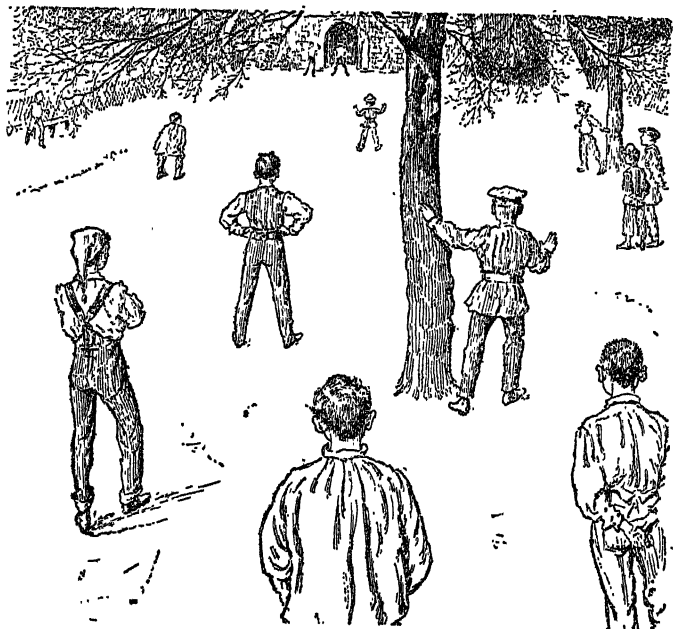
"Tum-te-dum-tum-tum . . .
Tum-te-dum-di, diddle-iddle um!"

e da capo, again and again. Chardonnet was no heavenborn musician.

Monsieur Bonzig—or "le grand Bonzig," as he was called behind his back—sat at his table on the estrade, correcting the exercises of the eighth class (*huitième*), which he coached in Latin and French. It was the lowest class in the school; yet one learnt much in it that was of consequence; not, indeed, that Balbus built a wall—as

I'm told we learn over here (a small matter to make such a fuss about after so many years)—but that the Lord made heaven and earth in six days, and rested on the seventh.

He (Monsieur Bonzig) seemed hot and weary, as well he might, and sighed, and looked up every now and then to mop his brow and think. And as he gazed into the green and azure depths beyond the north window, his dark brown eyes quivered and vibrated from side to side through his spectacles with a queer quick tremolo, such as I have never seen in any eyes but his.



INSTITUTION F. BROSSARD

About five-and-twenty boys sat at their desks; boys of all ages between seven and fourteen—many with closely cropped hair, “à la malcontent,” like nice little innocent convicts; and nearly all in blouses, mostly blue; some with their garments loosely flowing; others confined at the waist by a tricoloured ceinture de gymnastique, so deep and stiff it almost amounted to stays.

As for the boys themselves, some were energetic and industrious—some listless and lazy and lolling, and quite languid with the heat—some fidgety and restless, on the lookout for excitement of any kind: a cab or carriage raising the dust on its way to the Bois—a water-cart laying it (there were no hydrants then); a courier bearing royal despatches, or a mounted orderly; the Passy omnibus, to or fro every ten or twelve minutes; the marchand de coco with his bell; a regiment of the line with its band; a chorus of peripatetic

Orphéonistes—a swallow, a butterfly, a humblebee; a far-off balloon oh, joy!—any sight or sound to relieve the tedium of those two mortal school-hours that dragged their weary lengths from half-past one till half-past three—every day but Sunday and Thursday.

(Even now I find the early afternoon a little trying to wear through without a nap, say from two to four.)

At 3.30 there would come a half-hour's interval of play, and then the class of French literature from four till dinner-time at six—a class that was more than endurable on account of the liveliness and charm of Monsieur Durosier, who journeyed all the way from the Collège de France every Saturday afternoon in June and July to tell us boys of the quatrième all about Villon and Ronsard, and Marot and Charles d'Orléans (*exceptis excipiendis*, of course), and other pleasant people who didn't deal in Greek or Latin or mathematics, and knew better than to trouble themselves overmuch about formal French grammar and niggling French prosody.

Besides, everything was pleasant on a Saturday afternoon on account of the nearness of the day of days—

“And that's the day that comes between
The Saturday and Monday” . . .

in France.

I had just finished translating my twenty lines of Virgil—

“Infandum, regina, jubes renovare,” &c.

Oh, crimini, but it *was* hot! and how I disliked the pious Æneas! I couldn't have hated him worse if I'd been poor Dido's favourite younger brother (not mentioned by Publius Vergilius Maro, if I remember).

Palaiseau, who sat next to me, had a cold in his head, and kept sniffing in a manner that got on my nerves.

“Mouche-toi donc, animal!” I whispered; “tu me dégoûtes, à la fin!”

Palaiseau always sniffed, whether he had a cold or not.

“Taisez-vous, Maurice—ou je vous donne cent vers à copier!” said M. Bonzig, and his eyes quiveringly glittered through his glasses as he fixed me.

Palaiseau, in his brief triumph, sniffed louder.

“Palaiseau,” said Monsieur Bonzig, “si vous vous serviez de votre mouchoir—hein? Je crois que cela ne gênerait personne!” (If you were to use your pocket-handkerchief—eh? I don't think it would inconvenience anybody!)

At this there was a general titter all round, which was immediately suppressed, as in a court of law; and Palaiseau reluctantly and noisily did as he was told.

In front of me that dishonest little sneak Rapaud, with a tall parapet of books before him to serve as a screen, one hand shading his eyes, and an inkless pen in the other, was scratching his copy-book with noisy earnestness, as if time were too short for all he

had to write about the pious Æneas's recitative, while he surreptitiously read the *Comte de Monte Cristo*, which lay open in his lap—just at the part where the body, sewn up in a sack, was going to be hurled into the Mediterranean. I knew the page well. There was a splash of red ink on it.

It made my blood boil with virtuous indignation to watch him, and I coughed and hemmed again and again to attract his attention, for his back was nearly towards me. He heard me perfectly, took no notice whatever, the deceitful little beast. He was to have given up *Monte Cristo* to me at half-past two, and here it was twenty minutes to three! Besides which, it was *my Monte Cristo*, bought with my own small savings and smuggled into school by me at great risk to myself.

"Maurice!" said M. Bonzig.

"Oui, m'sieur!" said I. I will translate—

"You shall conjugate and copy out for me forty times the compound verb, 'I cough without necessity to distract the attention of my comrade Rapaud from his Latin exercise!'"

"Moi, m'sieur?" I ask innocently.

"Oui, vous!"

"Bien, m'sieur!"

Just then there was a clatter by the fountain, and the shrill small pipe of D'Aurigny, the youngest boy in the school, exclaimed—
"Hé! Hé! Oh là là! Le Roi qui passe!"

And we all jumped up, and stood on forms, and craned our necks to see Louis Philippe I. and his Queen drive quickly by in their big blue carriage and four, with their two blue-and-silver liveried outriders trotting in front, on their way from St.-Cloud to the Tuileries.

"Sponde! Sélancy! fermez les fenêtres, ou je vous mets tous au pain sec pour un mois!" thundered M. Bonzig, who did not approve of kings and queens—an appalling threat which appalled nobody, for when he forgot to forget he always relented; for instance, he quite forgot to insist on that formidable compound verb of mine.

Suddenly the door of the school-room flew open, and the tall, portly figure of Monsieur Brossard appeared, leading by the wrist a very fair-haired boy of thirteen or so, dressed in an Eton jacket and light blue trousers, with a white chimney-pot silk hat, which he carried in his hand—an English boy, evidently; but of an aspect so singularly agreeable one didn't need to be English one's self to warm towards him at once.

"Monsieur Bonzig, and gentlemen!" said the head master (in French, of course). "Here is the new boy; he calls himself Bartholomieu Josselin. He is English, but he knows French as well as you. I hope you will find in him a good comrade, honourable and frank and brave, and that he will find the same in you—Maurice!" (that was me).

"Oui, m'sieur!"

"I specially recommend Josselin to you."

"Moi, m'sieur?"

"Yes, *you*; he is of your age, and one of your compatriots. Don't forget."

"Bien, m'sieur."

"And now, Josselin, take that vacant desk, which will be yours henceforth. You will find the necessary books and copy-books inside; you will be in the fifth class, under Monsieur Dumollard."



THE NEW BOY

You will occupy yourself with the study of Cornelius Nepos, the commentaries of Caesar, and Xenophon's retreat of the ten thousand. *Soyez diligent et attentif, mon ami; à plus tard!*"

He gave the boy a friendly pat on the cheek and left the room.

Josselin walked to his desk and sat down, between d'Adhémair and Laferté, both of whom were *en cinquième*. He pulled a Caesar out of his desk and tried to read it. He became an object of passionate interest to the whole school-room, till M. Bonzig said:

"The first who lifts his eyes from his desk to stare at '*le nouveau*' shall be *au piquet* for half-an-hour!" (To be *au piquet* is to stand

with your back to a tree for part of the following play-time; and the play-time which was to follow would last just thirty minutes.)

Presently I looked up, in spite of piquet, and caught the new boy's eye, which was large and blue and soft, and very sad and sentimental, and looked as if he were thinking of his mammy, as I did constantly of mine during my first week at Brossard's three years before.

Soon, however, that sad eye slowly winked at me, with an expression so droll that I all but laughed aloud.

Then its owner felt in the inner breast-pocket of his Eton jacket with great care, and delicately drew forth by the tail a very fat white mouse, that seemed quite tame, and ran up his arm to his wide shirt collar, and tried to burrow there; and the boys began to interest themselves breathlessly in this engaging little quadruped.

M. Bonzig looked up again, furious; but his spectacles had grown misty from the heat and he couldn't see, and he wiped them; and meanwhile the mouse was quickly smuggled back to its former nest.

Josselin drew a large clean pocket-handkerchief from his trousers and buried his head in his desk, and there was silence.

"La!—ré, fa!—la!—ré"—

So strummed, over and over again, poor Chardonnet in his remote parlour—he was getting tired.

I have heard "*L'Invitation à la Valse*" many hundreds of times since then, and in many countries, but never that bar without thinking of Josselin and his little white mouse.

"Fermes votre pupitre, Josselin," said M. Bonzig, after a few minutes.

Josselin shut his desk and beamed genially at the usher.

"What book have you got there, Josselin—Caesar or Cornelius Nepos?"

Josselin held the book with its title-page open for M. Bonzig to read.

"Are you dumb, Josselin? Can't you speak?"

Josselin tried to speak, but uttered no sound.

"Josselin, come here—opposite me."

Josselin came and stood opposite M. Bonzig and made a nice little bow.

"What have you got in your mouth, Josselin—chocolate?—barley-sugar?—caoutchouc?—or an indiarubber ball?"

Josselin shrugged his shoulders and looked pensive, but spoke never a word.

"Open quick the mouth, Josselin!"

And Monsieur Bonzig, leaning over the table, deftly put his thumb and forefinger between the boy's lips, and drew forth slowly a large white pocket-handkerchief, which seemed never to end, and threw it on the floor with solemn dignity.

The whole schoolroom was convulsed with laughter.

"Josselin—leave the room—you will be severely punished, as you

deserve—you are a vulgar buffoon—a jocrisse—a paltoquet, a mountebank! Go, petit polisson—go!”

The polisson picked up his pocket-handkerchief and went—quite quietly, with simple manly grace; and that’s the first I ever saw of Barty Josselin—and it was some fifty years ago.

At 3.30 the bell sounded for the half-hour’s recreation, and the boys came out to play.

Josselin was sitting alone on a bench, thoughtful, with his hand in the inner breast-pocket of his Eton jacket.



A LITTLE PEACE-MAKER

M. Bonzig went straight to him, buttoned up and severe—his eyes dancing, and glancing from right to left through his spectacles; and Josselin stood up very politely.

“Sit down!” said M. Bonzig; and sat beside him, and talked to him with grim austerity for ten minutes or more, and the boy seemed very penitent and sorry.

Presently he drew forth from his pocket his white mouse, and showed it to the long usher, who looked at it with great seeming interest for a long time, and finally took it into the palm of his own hand—where it stood on its hind legs—and stroked it with his little finger.

Soon Josselin produced a small box of chocolate drops, which he opened and offered to M. Bonzig, who took one and put it in his mouth, and seemed to like it. Then they got up and walked to and fro together and the usher put his arm round the boy's shoulder, and there was peace and good-will between them; and before they parted Josselin had entrusted his white mouse to "le grand Bonzig"—who entrusted it to Mlle. Marceline, the head lingère, a very kind and handsome person, who found for it a comfortable home in an old bonbon box lined with blue satin, where it had a large family and fed on the best, and lived happily ever after.

But things did not go smoothly for Josselin all that Saturday afternoon. When Bonzig left, the boys gathered round "le nouveau," large and small, and asked questions. And just before the bell sounded for French literature, I saw him defending himself with his two British fists against Dugit, a big boy with whiskers, who had him by the collar and was kicking him to rights. It seems that Dugit had called him, in would-be English, "Pretty voman," and this had so offended him that he had hit the whiskered one straight in the eye.

Then French literature for the *quatrième* till six; then dinner for all—soup, boiled beef (not salt), lentils; and Gruyère cheese, quite two ounces each; then French rounders till half-past seven; then lesson preparation (with *Monte Cristos* in one's lap, or *Mysteries of Paris*, or *Wandering Jews*) till nine.

Then ding-dang-dong, and, at the sleepy usher's nod, a sleepy boy would rise and recite the perfunctory evening prayer in a dull sing-song voice—beginning, "Notre Père, qui êtes aux cieux, vous dont le regard scrutateur pénètre jusque dans les replis les plus profonds de nos cœurs," &c., &c., and ending, "au nom du Père, du Fils, et du St. Esprit, ainsi soit-il!"

And then, bed—Josselin in my dormitory, but a long way off, between d'Adhémar and Laferté; while Palaiseau snorted and sniffed himself to sleep in the bed next mine, and Rapaud still tried to read the immortal works of the elder Dumas by the light of a little oil-lamp six yards off, suspended from a nail in the blank wall over the chimney-piece.

The Institution F. Brossard was a very expensive private school, just twice as expensive as the most expensive of the Parisian public schools—Ste.-Barbe, François Premier, Louis-le-Grand, &c.

These great colleges, which were good enough for the sons of Louis Philippe, were not thought good enough for me by my dear mother, who was Irish, and whose only brother had been at Eton, and was now captain in an English cavalry regiment—so she had aristocratic notions. It used to be rather an Irish failing in those days.

My father, James Maurice, also English (and a little Scotch), and

by no means an aristocrat, was junior partner in the great firm of Vougeot-Conti et Cie., wine merchants, Dijon. And at Dijon I had spent much of my childhood, and been to a day-school there, and led a very happy life indeed.

Then I was sent to Brossard's school, in the Avenue de St.-Cloud, Paris, where I was again very happy, and fond of (nearly) everybody, from the splendid headmaster and his handsome son, Monsieur Mérovée, down to Antoine and Francisque, the men-servants, and Père Jaurion, the concierge, and his wife, who sold croquets and pains d'épices and "blom-boudingues," and sucre-d'orge and nougat and pâte de guimauve; also pralines, dragées, and grey sandy cakes of chocolate a penny a piece; and gave one unlimited credit; and never dunned one, unless bribed to do so by parents, so as to impress on us small boys a proper horror of debt.

Whatever principles I have held through life on this important subject I set down to a private interview my mother had with le père et la mère Jaurion, to whom I had run in debt five francs during the horrible winter of '47-8. They made my life a hideous burden to me for a whole summer term, and I have never owed any one a penny since.

The Institution consisted of four separate buildings, or "corps de logis."

In the middle, dominating the situation, was a Greco-Roman pavilion, with a handsome Doric portico elevated ten or twelve feet above the ground, on a large handsome terrace paved with asphalt and shaded by horse-chestnut trees. Under this noble esplanade, and ventilating themselves into it, were the kitchen and offices and pantry, and also the refectory—a long room, furnished with two parallel tables, covered at the top by a greenish oil-cloth spotted all over with small black disks; and alongside of these tables were wooden forms for the boys to sit together at meat—"la table des grands," "la table des petits," each big enough for thirty boys and three or four masters. M. Brossard and his family breakfasted and dined apart, in their own private dining-room, close by.

In this big refectory, three times daily, at 7.30 in the morning, at noon, and at 6 P.M., boys and masters took their quotidian sustenance quite informally, without any laying of cloths or saying of grace either before or after; one ate there to live—one did not live merely to eat, at the Pension Brossard.

Breakfast consisted of a thick soup, rich in dark-hued garden produce, and a large hunk of bread—except on Thursdays, when a pat of butter was served out to each boy instead of that Spartan broth—that "brouet noir des Lacédémoniens," as we called it.

Everybody who has lived in France knows how good French butter can often be—and French bread. We triturated each our pat with rock-salt and made a round ball of it, and dug a hole in our hunk to put it in, and ate it in the play-ground with clasp-knives, making it last as long as we could.

This, and the half-holiday in the afternoon, made Thursday a day to be marked with a white stone. When you are up at five in summer, at half-past five in the winter, and have had an hour and a half or two hours' preparation before your first meal at 7.30, French bread-and-butter is not a bad thing to break your fast with.

Then, from eight till twelve, class—Latin, Greek, French, English, German—and mathematics and geometry—history, geography, chemistry, physics—everything that you must get to know before you can hope to obtain your degree of Bachelor of Letters or Sciences, or be admitted to the Polytechnic School, or the Normal, or the Central, or that of Mines, or that of Roads and Bridges, or the Military School of St.-Cyr, or the Naval School of the Borda. All this was fifty years ago; of course names of schools may have changed, and even the sciences themselves.

Then, at twelve, the second breakfast, meat (or salt fish on Fridays), a dish of vegetables, lentils, red or white beans, salad, potatoes, &c.; a dessert which consisted of fruit or cheese or a French pudding. This banquet over, a master would stand up in his place and call for silence, and read out loud the list of boys who were to be kept in during the play-hour that followed—

"*À la retenue*, Messieurs Maurice, Rapaud, de Villars, Jolivet, Sponde," &c. Then play till 1.30, and very good play, too; rounders, which are better and far more complicated in France than in England; "barres"; "barres traversières," as rough a game as football; fly the garter, or "la raie," &c., &c., according to the season. And then afternoon study, at the summons of that dreadful bell whose music was so sweet when it rang the hour for meals or recreation or sleep—so hideously discordant at 5.30 on a foggy December Monday morning.

Altogether eleven hours' work daily and four hours' play, and sleep from nine till five or half-past. I find this leaves half-an-hour unaccounted for, so I must have made a mistake somewhere. But it all happened fifty years ago, so it's not of much consequence now.

Probably they have changed all that in France by this time, and made school life a little easier there, especially for nice little English boys—and nice little French boys too. I hope so, very much; for French boys can be as nice as any, especially at such institutions as F. Brossard's if there are any left.

Most of my comrades, aged from seven to nineteen or twenty, were the sons of well-to-do fathers—soldiers, sailors, rentiers, owners of land, public officials, in professions or business or trade. A dozen or so were of aristocratic descent—three or four very great swells indeed: for instance, two marquises (one of whom spoke English, having an English mother); a count bearing a string of beautiful names a thousand years old, and even more—for they were constantly turning up in the *Classe d'Histoire de France au moyen âge*; a Belgian viscount of immense wealth and immense

good-nature; and several very rich Jews, who were neither very clever nor very stupid, but as a rule, rather popular.

Then we had a few of humble station—the son of the woman who washed for us; Jules, the natural son of a brave old caporal in the trente-septième légère (a countryman of M. Brossard's), who was not well off—so I suspect his son was taught and fed for nothing—the Brossards were very liberal; Filosel, the only child of a small retail hosier in the Rue St.-Denis (who thought no sacrifice too great to keep his son at such a first-rate private school), and others.

During the seven years I spent at Brossard's I never once heard paternal wealth (or the want of it) or paternal rank or position alluded to by master, pupil, or servant—especially never a word or an allusion that could have given a moment's umbrage to the most sensitive little only son of a well-to-do West End cheesemonger, that ever got smuggled into a private suburban boardingschool kept "for the sons of gentlemen only," and was so chaffed and bullied there that his father had to take him away, and send him to Eton instead, where the "sons of gentlemen" have better manners, it seems; or even to France, where "the sons of gentlemen" have the best manners of all—or used to have before a certain and of December—as distinctly I remember; nous avons changé tout cela!

The head-master was a famous republican, and after February '48 was elected a "représentant du peuple" for the Dauphiné, and sat in the Chamber of Deputies—for a very short time, alas!

So I fancy that the titled and particed boys—"les nobles"—were of families that had drifted away from the lily and white flag of their loyal ancestors—from Rome and the Pope and the past.

Anyhow, none of our young nobles, when at home, seemed to live in the noble Faubourg across the river, and there were no clericals or ultramontanes among us, high or low—we were all red, white, and blue in equal and impartial combination. All this *par parenthèse*.

On the asphalt terrace also, but separated from the head-master's classic habitation by a small square space, was the *lingerie*, managed by Mlle. Marceline and her two subordinates, Constance and Félicité; and beneath this, le père et la mère Jaurion sold their cheap goodies, and jealously guarded the gates that secluded us from the wicked world outside—where women are, and merchants of tobacco, and cafés where you can sip the opalescent absinthe, and libraries where you can buy books more diverting than the *Adventures of Telemachus*!

On the opposite or western side was the gymnastic ground, enclosed in a wire fence, but free of access at all times—a place of paramount importance in all French schools, public and private.

From the doors of the refectory the general playground sloped gently down northwards to the Rond-point, where it was bounded by double gates of wood and iron that were always shut; and on each hither side of these rose an oblong dwelling of red brick, two storeys high, and capable of accommodating thirty boys, sleeping

or waking, at work or rest or play; for in bad weather we played indoors, or tried to, chess, draughts, backgammon, and the like—even blind-man's-buff (*Colin Maillard*)—even puss in the corner (*aux quatre coins*!).

All the class-rooms and school-rooms were on the ground-floor; above, the dormitories and masters' rooms.

These two buildings were symmetrical. One held the boys over fourteen, from the third class up to the first; the other (into the "salle d'études" of which the reader has already been admitted), the boys from the fourth down to the eighth, or lowest form of all—just the reverse of an English school.

On either side of the play-ground were narrow strips of garden cultivated by boys whose tastes lay that way, and small arbours overgrown with convolvulus and other creepers—snug little verdant retreats, where one fed the mind on literature not sanctioned by the authorities, and smoked cigarettes of caporal, and even coloured pipes, and was sick without fear of detection (*piquait son renard sans crainte d'être collé*).

Finally, behind Père Brossard's Ciceronian Villa, on the south, was a handsome garden (we called it Tusculum); a green flowery pleasaunce reserved for the head-master's married daughter (Madame Germain) and her family—good people with whom we had nothing to do.

Would I could subjoin a ground-plan of the Institution F. Brossard, where Barty Josselin spent four such happy years, and was so universally and singularly popular!

Why should I take such pains about all this, and dwell so laboriously on all these minute details?

Firstly, because it all concerns Josselin and the story of his life and I am so proud and happy to be the biographer of such a man, at his own often expressed desire, that I hardly know where to leave off and what to leave out. Also, this is quite a new trade for me, who have only dealt hitherto in foreign wines, and British party politics, and bimetallism—and can only write in telegraphese!

Secondly, because I find it such a keen personal joy to evoke and follow out, and realise to myself, by means of pen and pencil, all these personal reminiscences; and with such a capital excuse for prolixity!

At the top of every page I have to pull myself together to remind myself that it is not of the Right Honourable Sir Robert Maurice, Bart., M. P., that I am telling the tale—any one can do that—but of a certain Englishman who wrote *Sardonix*, to the everlasting joy and pride of the land of his *fathers*—and of a certain Frenchman who wrote *Bertie aux grands pieds*, and moved his *mother-country* to such delight of tears and tender laughter as it had never known before.

Dear me! the boys who lived and learnt at Brossard's school fifty years ago, and the masters who taught there (peace to their

ashes!), are far more to my taste than the actual human beings among whom my dull existence of business and politics and society is mostly spent in these days. The school must have broken up somewhere about the early fifties. The stuccoed Doric dwelling was long since replaced by an important stone mansion, in a very different style of architecture—the abode of a wealthy banker—and this again, later, by a palace many storeys high. The two school-houses in red brick are no more; the play-ground grew into a luxuriant garden, where a dozen very tall trees overtopped the rest; from their evident age and their position in regard to each other they must have been old friends of mine grown out of all knowledge.

I saw them only twenty years ago, from the top of a Passy omnibus, and recognised every one of them. I went from the Arc de Triomphe to Passy and back quite a dozen times, on purpose—once for each tree! It touched me to think how often the author of *Sardonyx* has stood leaning his back against one of those giants—*au piquet*!

They are now no more; and Passy omnibuses no longer ply up and down the Allée du Bois de Boulogne, which is now an avenue of palaces.

An umbrageous lane that led from the Rond-point to Chaillot (that very forgettable, and by me quite forgotten, quarter) separated the Institution F. Brossard from the Pensionnat Mélanie Jalabert—a beautiful pseudo-Gothic castle which was tenanted for a while by Prince de Carabas-Chenonceaux after Mlle. Jalabert had broken up her ladies' school in 1849.

My mother boarded and lodged there, with my little sister, in the summer of 1847. There were one or two other English lady boarders, half-pupils—much younger than my mother—indeed, they may be alive now. If they are, and this should happen to meet their eye, may I ask them to remember kindly the Irish wife of the Scotch merchant of French wines who supplied them with the innocent vintage of Mâcon (ah! who knows that innocence better than I?), and his pretty little daughter who played the piano so nicely? May I beg them also not to think it necessary to communicate with me on the subject, or, if they do, not to expect an answer?

One night Mlle. Jalabert gave a small dance, and Mérovée Brossard was invited, and also half-a-dozen of his favourite pupils, and a fair-haired English boy of thirteen danced with the beautiful Miss——.

They came to grief and fell together in a heap on the slippery floor; but no bones were broken, and there was much good-natured laughter at their expense. If Miss—— (that was) is still among the quick, and remembers, it may interest her to know that fair-haired English boy's name was no less than Bartholomew Josselin; and that another English boy, somewhat thick-set and stumpy, and not much to look at, held her in deep love, admiration, and awe—and has not forgotten!

If I happen to mention this, it is not with a view of tempting

her into any correspondence about this little episode of bygone years, should this ever meet her eye.

The Sunday morning that followed Barty's début at Brossard's the boys went to church in the Rue de l'Église, Passy—and he with them, for he had been brought up a Roman Catholic. And I went round to Mlle. Jalabert's to see my mother and sister.

I told them all about the new boy, and they were much interested. Suddenly my mother exclaimed—

"Bartholomew Josselin? why, dear me! that must be Lord Runswick's son—Lord Runswick, who was the eldest son of the present Marquis of Whitby. He was in the 17th Lancers with your uncle Charles, who was very fond of him. He left the army twenty years ago, and married Lady Selina Jobhouse—and his wife went mad. Then he fell in love with the famous Antoinette Josselin at the 'Bouffes,' and wanted so much to marry her that he tried to get a divorce. It was tried in the House of Lords, I believe; but didn't succeed—so they—a—well—they contracted a—*a morganatic* marriage, you know; and your friend was born. And poor Lord Runswick was killed in a duel about a dog, when his son was two years old; and his mother left the stage, and—"

Just here the beautiful Miss——came in with her sister, and there was no more of Josselin's family history; and I forgot all about it for the day. For I passionately loved the beautiful Miss——; I was just thirteen!

But next morning I said to him at breakfast, in English—

"Wasn't your father killed in a duel?"

"Yes," said Barty, looking grave.

"Wasn't he called Lord Runswick?"

"Yes," said Barty, looking graver still.

"Then why are you called Josselin?"

"Ask no questions and you'll get no lies," said Barty, looking very grave indeed—and I dropped the subject.

And here I may as well rapidly go through the wellknown story of his birth and early childhood.

His father, Lord Runswick, fell desperately in love with the beautiful Antoinette Josselin after his own wife had gone hopelessly mad. He failed to obtain a divorce, naturally. Antoinette was as much in love with him, and they lived together as man and wife, and Barty was born. They were said to be the handsomest couple in Paris, and immensely popular among all who knew them; though, of course, society did not open its doors to la belle Madame de Ronsvic, as she was called.

She was the daughter of poor fisher-folk in Le Pollet, Dieppe. I, with Barty for a guide, have seen the lowly dwelling where her infancy and childhood were spent, and which Barty remembered well, and also such of her kin as were still alive in 1870, and felt it was good to come of such a race, humble as they were. They were physically splendid people, almost as splendid as Barty him-

self; and as I was told by many who knew them well, as good to know and live with as they were good to look at—all that was easy to see—and their manners were delightful.

When Antoinette was twelve, she went to stay in Paris with her



LORD RUNSWICK AND ANTOINETTE JOSSELIN

uncle and aunt, who were concierges to Prince Scorchakoff in the Rue du Faubourg St.-Honoré; next door, or next door but one, to the Elysée Bourbon, as it was called then. And there the Princess took a fancy to her, and had her carefully educated, especially in music; for the child had a charming voice and a great musical

talent, besides being beautiful to the eye—gifts which her son inherited.

Then she became for three or four years a pupil at the Conservatoire, and finally went on the stage, and was soon one of the most brilliant stars of the Parisian theatre at its most brilliant period.

Then she met the handsome English lord, who was forty, and they fell in love with each other, and all happened as I have told.

In the spring of 1837 Lord Runswick was killed in a duel by Lieutenant Rondelis, of the deuxième Spahis. Antoinette's dog had jumped up to play with the lieutenant, who struck it with his cane (for he was "*en pékin*," it appears—in mufti), and Lord Runswick laid his own cane across the Frenchman's back; and next morning they fought with swords, by the Mare aux Biches, in the Bois de Boulogne—a little secluded, sedgy pool, hardly more than six inches deep and six yards across. Barty and I have often skated there as boys.

The Englishman was run throught at the first lunge, and fell dead on the spot.

A few years ago Barty met the son of the man who killed Lord Runswick—it was at the French Embassy in Albert Gate. They were introduced to each other, and M. Rondelis told Barty how his own father's life had been poisoned by sorrow and remorse at having had "*la main si malheureuse*" on that fatal morning by the Mare aux Biches.

Poor Antoinette, mad with grief, left the stage, and went with her little boy to live in the Pollet, near her parents. Three years later she died there, of typhus, and Barty was left an orphan and penniless; for Lord Runswick had been poor, and lived beyond his means, and died in debt.

Lord Archibald Rohan, a favourite younger brother of Runswick's (not the heir), came to Dieppe from Dover (where he was quartered with his regiment, the 7th Royal Fusileers) to see the boy, and took a fancy to him, and brought him back to Dover to show his wife, who was also French—a daughter of the old Gascon family of Lonlay-Savignac, who had gone into trade (chocolate) and become immensely rich. They (the Rohans) had been married eight years, and had as yet no children of their own. Lady Archibald was delighted with the child, who was quite beautiful. She fell in love with the little creature at the first sight of him—and fed him, on the evening of his arrival, with crumpets and buttered toast. And in return he danced "*La Diep-poise*" for her, and sang her a little ungrammatical ditty in praise of wine and women. It began—

"Beuvons, beuvons, beuvons donc
De ce vin le meilleur du monde . . .
Beuvons, beuvons, beuvons donc
De ce vin, car il est très-bon!
Si je n'en beuvions pas,
J'aurions la pépi-e!
Ce qui me . . ."

I have forgotten the rest—indeed, I am not quite sure that it is fit for the drawing-room!

"Ah, mon Dieu! quel amour d'enfant! Oh! gardons le!" cried my lady, and they kept him.

I can imagine the scene. Indeed, Lady Archibald has described it to me, and Barty remembered it well. It was his earliest English recollection, and he has loved buttered toast and crumpets ever since—as well as women and wine. And thus he was adopted by the Archibald Rohans. They got him an English governess and a



"QUEL AMOUR D'ENFANT!"

pony; and in two years he went to a day-school in Dover, kept by a Miss Stone, who is actually alive at present and remembers him well; and so he became quite a little English boy, but kept up his French through Lady Archibald, who was passionately devoted to him, although by this time she had a little daughter of her own, whom Barty always looked upon as his sister, and who is now dead. (She became Lord Frognal's wife—he died in 1870—and she afterwards married Mr. Justice Robertson.)

Barty's French grandfather and grandmother came over from Dieppe once a year to see him, and were well pleased with the happy condition of his new life; and the more Lord and Lady Archibald saw of these grandparents of his, the more pleased they were that he had become the child of their adoption. For they

were first-rate people to descend from, these simple toilers of the sea; better, perhaps, *cæteris paribus*, than even the Rohans themselves.

All this early phase of little Josselin's life seems to have been singularly happy. Every year at Christmas he went with the Rohans to Castle Rohan in Yorkshire, where his English grandfather lived, the Marquis of Whitby—and where he was petted and made much of by all the members, young and old (especially female), of that very ancient family, which had originally come from Brittany in France, as the name shows; but were not millionaires, and never had been.

Often, too, they went to Paris—and in 1847 Colonel Lord Archibald sold out, and they elected to go and live there, in the Rue du Bac; and Barty was sent to the Institution F. Brossard, where he was soon destined to become the most popular boy, with boys and masters alike, that had ever been in the school (in any school, I should think), in spite of conduct that was too often the reverse of exemplary.

Indeed, even from his early boyhood he was the most extraordinarily gifted creature I have ever known, or even heard of; a kind of spontaneous humorous Crichton, to whom all things came easily—and life itself as an uncommonly good joke. During that summer term of 1847 I did not see very much of him. He was in the class below mine, and took up with Laferté and little Bussy-Rabutin, who were first-rate boys, and laughed at everything he said, and worshipped him. So did everybody else, sooner or later; indeed, it soon became evident that he was a most exceptional little person.

In the first place, his beauty was absolutely angelic, as will be readily believed by all who have known him since. The mere sight of him as a boy made people pity his father and mother for being dead!

Then he had a charming gift of singing little French and English ditties, comic or touching, with his delightful fresh young pipe, and accompanying himself quite nicely on either piano or guitar without really knowing a note of music. Then he could draw caricatures that we boys thought inimitable, much funnier than Cham's or Bertall's or Gavarni's, and collected and treasured up. I have dozens of them now—they make me laugh still, and bring back memories of which the charm is indescribable; and their pathos, to me!

And then how funny he was himself, without effort, and with a fun that never failed! He was a born buffoon of the graceful kind—more whelp or kitten than monkey—ever playing the fool, in and out of season, but somehow always *à propos*; and French boys love a boy for that more than anything else—or did, in those days.

Such very simple buffooneries as they were, too—that gave him (and us) such stupendous delight!

For instance—he is sitting at evening study between Bussy-Rabutin and Laferté; M. Bonzig is usher for the evening.

At 8.30 Bussy-Rabutin gives way; in a whisper he informs Barty that he means to take a nap ("*piquer un chien*"), with his Gradus opened before him, and his hand supporting his weary brow as though in deep study. "But," says he—

"If Bonzig finds me out (*si Bonzig me colle*), give me a gentle nudge."

"All right!" says Barty—and off goes Bussy-Rabutin into his snooze.

8.45—Poor fat little Laferté falls into a snooze too, after giving Barty just the same commission—to nudge him directly he's found out from the *chaire*.

8.55—Intense silence; everybody hard at work. Even Bonzig is satisfied with the deep stillness and studious *recueillement* that brood over the scene—steady pens going—quick turning over of leaves of the Gradus ad Parnassum. Suddenly Barty sticks out his elbows and nudges both his neighbours at once, and both jump up, exclaiming, in a loud voice—

"Non, m'sieur, je n'dors pas. J'travaille."

Sensation. Even Bonzig laughs—and Barty is happy for a week.

Or else, again—a new usher, Monsieur Goupillon (from Gascony) is on duty in the schoolroom during afternoon school. He has a peculiar way of saying "*oê, vô!*" instead of "*oui, vous!*" to any boy who says "*moi, m'sieur?*" on being found fault with; and perceiving this, Barty manages to be found fault with every five minutes, and always says "*moi, m'sieur?*" so as to elicit the "*oê, vô!*" that gives him such delight.

At length M. Goupillon says—

"Josselin, if you force me to say '*oê, vô!*' to you once more, you shall be *à la retenue* for a week!"

"*Moi, m'sieur?*" says Josselin, quite innocently.

"*Oê, vô!*" shouts M. Goupillon, glaring with all his might, but quite unconscious that Barty has earned the threatened punishment! And again Barty is happy for a week; and so are we.

Such was Barty's humour, as a boy—mere drivel—but of such a kind that even his butts were fond of him. He would make M. Bonzig laugh in the middle of his severest penal sentences, and thus demoralise the whole schoolroom and set a shocking example, and be ordered *à la porte* of the *salle d'études*—an exile which was quite to his taste; for he would go straight off to the *lingerie* and entertain Mlle. Marceline and Constance and Félicité (who all three adored him) with comic songs and break-downs of his own invention, and imitations of everybody in the school. He was a born *histrion*—a kind of French Arthur Roberts—but very beautiful to the female eye, and also always dear to the female heart—a most delightful gift of God!

Then he was constantly being sent for when boys' friends and

parents came to see them, that he might sing and play the fool and show off his tricks, and so forth. It was one of M. Mérovée's greatest delights to put him through his paces. The message "on demande Monsieur Josselin au parloir" would be brought down once or twice a week, sometimes even in class or school room, and became quite a byword in the school; and many of the masters thought it a mistake and a pity. But Barty by no means disliked being made much of and showing off in this genial manner.

He could turn le père Brossard round his little finger, and Mérovée too. Whenever an extra holiday was to be begged for, or a favour obtained for any one, or the severity of a *pensum* mitigated, Barty was the messenger, and seldom failed.

His constitution, inherited from a long line of frugal seafaring Norman ancestors (not to mention another long line of well-fed, well-bred Yorkshire squires), was magnificent. His spirits never failed. He could see the satellites of Jupiter with the naked eye; this was often tested by M. Dumollard, maître de mathématiques (et de cosmographie), who had a telescope, which, with a little goodwill on the gazer's part, made Jupiter look as big as the moon, and its moons like stars of the first magnitude.

His sense of hearing was also exceptionally keen. He could hear a watch tick in the next room, and perceive very high sounds to which ordinary human ears are deaf (this was found out later); and when we played blindman's-buff on a rainy day, he could, blindfolded, tell every boy he caught hold of—not by feeling him all over like the rest of us, but by the mere smell of his hair, or his hands, or his blouse! No wonder he was so much more alive than the rest of us! According to the amiable, modest, polite, delicately humorous, and even tolerant and considerate Professor Max Nordau, this perfection of the olfactory sense proclaims poor Barty a degenerate! I only wish there were a few more like him, and that I were a little more like him myself!

By the way, how proud young Germany must feel of its enlightened Max, and how fond of him, to be sure! Mes compliments!

But the most astounding thing of all (it seems incredible, but all the world knows it by this time, and it will be accounted for later on) is that at certain times and seasons Barty knew by an infallible instinct *where the north was*, to a point. Most of my readers will remember his extraordinary evidence as a witness in the "Rangoon" trial, and how this power was tested in open court, and how important were the issues involved, and how he refused to give any explanation of a gift so extraordinary.

It was often tried at school by blindfolding him, and turning him round and round till he was giddy, and asking him to point out where the north pole was, or the north star, and seven or eight times out of ten the answer was unerringly right. When he failed, he knew beforehand that for the time being he had lost the power, but could never say why. Little Doctor Larcher could never get

over his surprise at this strange phenomenon, nor explain it, and often brought some scientific friend from Paris to test it, who was equally nonplussed.

When cross-examined, Barty would merely say—

“Quelquefois je sais—quelquefois je ne sais pas—mais quand je sais, je sais, et il n’y a pas à s’y tromper!”

Indeed, on one occasion that I remember well, a very strange thing happened: he not only pointed out the north with absolute accuracy, as he stood carefully blindfolded in the gymnastic ground, after having been turned and twisted again and again—but, still blindfolded, he vaulted the wire fence and ran round to the refectory door which served as the home at rounders, all of us following; and there he danced a surprising dance of his own invention, that he called “La Paladine,” the most humorously graceful and grotesque exhibition I ever saw; and then, taking a ball out of his pocket, he shouted, “À l’amandier!” and threw the ball. Straight and swift it flew, and hit the almond-tree, which was quite twenty yards off; and after this he ran round the yard from base to base, as at “la balle au camp,” till he reached the camp again.

“If ever he goes blind,” said the wondering M. Mérovée, “he’ll never need a dog to lead him about.”

“He must have some special friend above!” said Madame Germain (Mérovée sister, who was looking on).

Prophetic words! I have never forgotten them, nor the tear that glistened in each of her kind eyes as she spoke. She was a deeply religious and very emotional person, and loved Barty almost as if he were a child of her own.

Such women have strange intuitions.

Barty was often asked to repeat this astonishing performance before sceptical people—parent of boys, visitors, &c.—who had been properly blindfolded; but he could never be induced to do so.

There was no mistake about the blindfolding—I helped in it myself; and he afterwards told me the whole thing was “aussi simple que bonjour” if once he felt the north—for then, with his back to the refectory door, he knew exactly the position and distance of every tree from where he was.

“It’s all nonsense about my going blind and being able to do without a dog,” he added; “I should be just as helpless as any other blind man, unless I was in a place I knew as well as my own pocket—like this playground! Besides, I shan’t go blind; nothing will ever happen to my eyes—they’re the strongest and best in the whole school!”

He said this exultingly, dilating his nostrils and chest; and looked proudly up and around, like Ajax defying the lightning.

“But what *do* you feel when you feel the north, Barty—a kind of tingling?” asked.

“Oh—I feel where it is—as if I’d got a mariner’s compass trembling inside my stomach—and as if I wasn’t afraid of anybody or

anything in the world—as if I could go and have my head chopped off and not care a fig.”

“Ah, well—I can’t make it out—I give it up,” I exclaimed.

“So do I,” exclaims Barty.

“But tell me, Barty,” I whispered, “have you—have you *really* got a—a-special friend above?”

“Ask no questions and you’ll get no lies,” said Barty, and winked at me one eye after the other—and went about his business; and I about mine.

Thus it is hardly to be wondered at that the spirit of this extraordinary boy seemed to pervade the Pension F. Brossard, almost from the day he came to the day he left it—a slender stripling over six feet high, beautiful as Apollo, but, alas! without his degree, and not an incipient hair on his lip or chin!

Of course the boy had his faults. He had a tremendous appetite, and was rather greedy—so was I, for that matter—and we were good customers to la mère Jaurion; especially he, for he always had lots of pocket-money, and was fond of standing treat all round. Yet, strange to say, he had such a loathing of meat, that soon by special favouritism a separate dish of eggs and milk and succulent vegetables was cooked expressly for him—a savoury mess that made all our mouths water merely to see and smell it, and filled us with envy, it was so good. Aglaé the cook took care of that!

“C’était pour Monsieur Josselin!”

And of this he would eat as much as three ordinary boys could eat of anything in the world.

Then he was quick-tempered and impulsive, and in frequent fights—in which he generally came off second best; for he was fond of fighting with bigger boys than himself. Victor or vanquished, he never bore malice—nor woke it in others, which is worse. But he would slap a face almost as soon as look at it, on rather slight provocation, I’m afraid—especially if it were an inch or two higher up than his own. And he was fond of showing off, and always wanted to throw farther and jump higher and run faster than any one else. Not, indeed, that he ever wished to *mentally* excel, or particularly admired those who did!

Also, he was apt to judge folk too much by their mere outward appearance and manner, and not very fond of dull, ugly, commonplace people—the very people, unfortunately, who were fondest of him; he really detested them, almost as much as they detest each other, in spite of many sterling qualities of the heart and head they sometimes possess. And yet he was their victim through life—for he was very soft, and never had the heart to snub the deadliest bores he ever writhed under, even undeserving ones! Like—, or —, the Bishop of —, or Lord Justice —, or General —, or Admiral —, or the Duke of —, &c., &c.

And he very unjustly disliked people of the bourgeois type—the respectable middle class, *quorum pars magna fui*!—especially if we

were very well off and successful, and thought ourselves of some consequence (as we now very often are, I beg to say), and showed it (as, I'm afraid, we sometimes do). He preferred the commonest artisan to M. Jourdain, the bourgeois gentilhomme, who was a very decent fellow, after all, and at least clean in his habits, and didn't use bad language or beat his wife!

Poor dear Barty! what would have become of all those priceless copyrights and royalties and what not if his old schoolfellow hadn't been a man of business? and where would Barty himself have been without his wife, who came from that very class?

And his admiration for an extremely good-looking person, even of his own sex, even a scavenger or a dustman, was almost snobbish. It was like a well-bred, well educated Englishman's frank fondness for a noble lord.

And next to physical beauty he admired great physical strength; and I sometimes think that it is to my possession of this single gift I owe some of the warm friendship I feel sure he always bore me; for, though he was a strong man, and topped me by an inch or two, I was stronger still—as a cart-horse is stronger than a racer.

For his own personal appearance, of which he always took the greatest care, he had a naïve admiration that he did not disguise. His candour in this respect was comical; yet, strange to say, he was really without vanity.

When he was in the Guards he would tell you quite frankly he was "the handsomest chap in all the Household Brigade, bar three"—just as he would tell you he was twenty last birthday. And the fun of it was that the three exceptions he was good enough to make, splendid fellows as they were, seemed as satyrs to Hyperion when compared with Barty Josselin. One (F. Pepys) was three or four inches taller, it is true, being six foot seven or eight—a giant. The two others had immense whiskers, which Barty openly envied, but could not emulate; and the moustache, with which he would have been quite decently endowed in time, was not permitted in an infantry regiment.

To return to the Pension Brossard, and Barty the schoolboy.

He adored Monsieur Mérovée because he was big and strong and handsome—not because he was one of the best fellows that ever lived. He disliked Monsieur Durosier, whom we were all so fond of, because he had a slight squint and a receding chin.

As for the Anglophobe, Monsieur Dumollard, who made no secret of his hatred and contempt for perfidious Albion . . .

"Dis donc, Josselin!" says Maurice, in English or French, as the case might be, "why don't you like Monsieur Dumollard? Eh? He always favours you more than any other chap in the school. I suppose you dislike him because he hates the English so, and always runs them down before you and me—and says they're all traitors and sneaks and hypocrites and bullies and cowards and

liars and snobs; and we can't answer him, because he's the mathematical master!"

"Ma foi, non!" says Josselin—"c'est pas pour ça!"

"Pourquoi, alors?" says Maurice (that's me).

"C'est parce qu'il a le pied bourgeois et la jambe canaille!" says Barty. (It's because he's got common legs and vulgar feet.)

And that's about the lowest and meanest thing I ever heard him say in his life.

Also, he was not always very sympathetic, as a boy, when one was sick or sorry or out of sorts, for he had never been ill in his life, never known an ache or a pain—except once mumps, which he seemed to thoroughly enjoy—and couldn't realise suffering of any kind, except such suffering as most schoolboys all over the world are often fond of inflicting on dumb animals: this drove him frantic, and led to many a licking by bigger boys. I remember several such scenes—one especially.

One frosty morning in January '48, just after breakfast, Jolivet trois (tertius) put a sparrow into his squirrel's cage, and the squirrel caught it in its claws, and cracked its skull like a nut and sucked its brain, while the poor bird still made a desperate struggle for life, and there was much laughter.

There was also, in consequence, a quick fight between Jolivet and Josselin; in which Barty got the worst, as usual—his foe was two years older, and quite an inch taller.

Afterwards, as the licked one sat on the edge of a small stone tank full of water and dabbed his swollen eye with a wet pocket-handkerchief, M. Dumollard, the mathematical master, made cheap fun of Britannic sentimentality about animals, and told us how the English noblesse were privileged to beat their wives with sticks no thicker than their ankles, and sell them "*au rabais*" in the horse-market of Smissfeld; and that they paid men to box each other to death on the stage of Drury Lane, and all that—deplorable things that we all know and are sorry for and ashamed, but cannot put a stop to.

The boys laughed, of course—they always did when Dumollard tried to be funny; "and many a joke had he," although his wit never degenerated into mere humour.

But they were so fond of Barty that they forgave him his insular affectation; some even helped him to dab his sore eye; among them Jolivet trois himself, who was a very good-natured chap, and very good-looking into the bargain; and he had received from Barty a sore eye too—*gallicè*, "un pochon"—*scholasticè*, "un œil au beurre noir!"

By the way, I fought with Jolivet once—about Æsop's fables! He said that Æsop was a lame poet of Lacedæmon—I, that Æsop was a little hunchback Armenian Jew; and I stuck to it. It was a Sunday afternoon, on the terrace by the lingerie.

He kicked as hard as he could, so I had to kick too. Mlle. Marceline

ran out with Constance and Félicité and tried to separate us, and got kicked by both (unintentionally, of course). Then up came Père Jaurion and kicked *me*! And they all took Jolivet's part, and said I was in the wrong, because I was English! What did *they* know about *Æsop*! So we made it up, and went in Jaurion's loge and stood each other a blom-boudingue on tick—and called Jaurion bad names.

"Comme c'est bête, de s'battre, hein?" said Jolivet, and I agreed with him. I don't know which of us really got the worst of it, for we hadn't disfigured each other in the least—and that's the best of kicking. Anyhow he was two years older than I, and three or four inches taller; so I'm glad, on the whole, that that small battle was interrupted.

It is really not for brag that I have lugged in this story—at least, I hope not. One never quite knows.

To go back to Barty: he was the most generous boy in the school. If I may paraphrase an old saying, he really didn't seem to know the difference betwixt tuum et meum. Everything he had, books, clothes, pocket money—even agate marbles, those priceless possessions to a French schoolboy—seemed to be also everybody else's who chose. I came across a very characteristic letter of his the other day, written from the Pension Brossard to his favourite aunt, Lady Caroline Grey (one of the Rohans), who adored him. It begins:—

"MY DEAR AUNT CAROLINE,—Thank you so much for the magnifying-glass, which is not only magnifying, but magnifique. Don't trouble to send any more gingerbread-nuts, as the boys are getting rather tired of them, especially Laferté and Bussy-Rabutin. I think we should all like some Scotch marmalade," &c. &c.

And though fond of romancing a little now and then, and embellishing a good story, he was absolutely truthful in important matters, and to be relied upon implicitly.

He seemed also to be quite without the sense of physical fear—a kind of callousness.

Such, roughly, was the boy who lived to write the *Motes in a Moonbeam* and *La quatrième Dimension* before he was thirty; and such, roughly, he remained through life, except for one thing: he grew to be the very soul of passionate and compassionate sympathy, as who doesn't feel who has ever read a page of his work, or even had speech with him for half-an-hour?

Whatever weaknesses he yielded to when he grew to man's estate are such as the world only too readily condones in many a famous man less tempted than Josselin was inevitably bound to be through life. Men of the Josselin type (there are not many—he stands pretty much alone) can scarcely be expected to journey from adolescence to middle age with that impeccable decorum which I—and

no doubt many of my masculine readers—have found it so easy to achieve, and find it now so pleasant to remember and get credit for. Let us think of *The Footprints of Aurora*, or *Étoiles*, or *Déjanire et Dalila*, or even *Les Trépassées de François Villon*!

Then let us look at Rajon's etching of Watts's portrait of him (the original is my own to look at whenever I like, and that is pretty often). And then let us not throw too many big stones, or too hard at Barty Josselin.

Well, the summer term of 1847 wore smoothly to its close—a happy “trimestre” during which the Institution F. Brossard reached the high-water mark of its prosperity.

There were sixty boys to be taught, and six house-masters to teach them, besides a few highly paid outsiders for special classes—such as the lively M. Durosier for French literature, and M. le Professeur Martineau for the higher mathematics, and so forth; and crammers and coaches for St.-Cyr, the Polytechnic School, the École des Ponts et Chaussées.

Also fencing-masters, gymnastic masters, a Dutch master who taught us German and Italian—an Irish master with a lovely brogue who taught us English. Shall I ever forget the blessed day when ten or twelve of us were presented with an *Ivanhoe* apiece as a class-book, or how Barty and I and Bonneville (who knew English) devoured the immortal story in less than a week—to the disgust of Rapaud, who refused to believe that we could possibly know such a beastly tongue as English well enough to read an English book for mere pleasure—on our desks in play-time, or on our laps in school, *en cachette*! “Quelle sacrée pose!”

He soon mislaid his own copy, did Rapaud; just as he mislaid my *Monte Cristo* and Jolivet's illustrated *Wandering Jew*—and it was always—

“Dis donc, Maurice!—prête-moi ton *Ivanhoé*!” (with an accent on the e), whenever he had to construe his twenty lines of Valère Scott—and what a hash he made of them!

Sometimes M. Brossard himself would come, smoking his big meerschaum, and help the English class during preparation, and put us up to a thing or two worth knowing.

“Rapaud, comment dit-on ‘pouvoir’ en anglais?”

“Sais pas, m'sieur!”

“Comment, petit crétin, tu ne sais pas!”

And Rapaud would receive a *pincée tordue*—a “twisted pinch”—on the back of his arm to quicken his memory.

“Oh, là, là!” he would howl—“je n' sais pas!”

“Et toi, Maurice?”

“Ça se dit ‘to be able,’ m'sieur!” I would say.

“Mais non, mon ami—tu oublies ta langue natale—ça se dit, ‘to can’! Maintenant, comment dirais-tu en anglais, ‘je voudrais pouvoir’?”

“Je dirais, ‘I would like to be able.’”

"Comment, encore! petit cancre! allons—tu es Anglais—tu sais bien que tu dirais, '*I would vill to can*'!"

Then M. Brossard turns to Barty: "A ton tour, Josselin!"

"Moi, m'sieur?" says Barty.

"Oui, toi!—comment dirais-tu, '*je pourrais vouloir*'?"

"Je dirais '*I would can to vill*,'" says Barty, quite unabashed.

"À la bonne heure! au moins tu sais ta langue, toi!" says Père Brossard, and pats him on the cheek; while Barty winks at me, the wink of successful time-serving hypocrisy, and Bonneville writhes with suppressed delight.

What lives most in my remembrance of that summer is the lovely weather we had, and the joy of the Passy swimming-bath every Thursday and Sunday from two till five or six; it comes back to me even now in heavenly dreams by night. 'I swim with giant side-strokes all round the Île des Cygnes between Passy and Grenelle, where the École de Natation was moored for the summer months.

Round and round the isle I go, up stream and down, and dive and float and wallow with bliss there is no telling—till the waters all dry up and disappear, and I am left wading in weeds and mud and drift and drought and desolation, and wake up shivering—and such is life.

As for Barty, he was all but amphibious, and reminded me of the seal at the Jardin des Plantes. He really seemed to spend most of the afternoon under water, coming up to breathe now and then at unexpected moments, with a stone in his mouth that he had picked up from the slimy bottom ten or twelve feet below—or a weed—or a dead mussel.

PART SECOND

"Laissons les regrets et les pleurs
À la vieillesse;
Jeunes, il faut cueillir les fleurs
De la jeunesse!"—BAÏF.

SOMETIMES we spent the Sunday morning in Paris, Barty and I—in picture-galleries and museums and wax-figure shows, churches and cemeteries, and the Hôtel Cluny and the Baths of Julian the Apostate—or the Jardin des Plantes, or the Morgue, or the knackers' yards at Montfaucon—or lovely slums. Then a swim at the Bains Deligny. Then lunch at some restaurant on the Quai Voltaire, or in the Quartier Latin. Then to some café on the Boulevards, drinking our demi-tasse and our chasse-café, and smoking our cigarettes like men, and picking our teeth like gentlemen of France.

Once after lunch at Vachette's with Berquin (who was seventeen) and Bonneville (the marquis who had got an English mother), we were sitting outside the Café des Variétés, in the midst of a crowd of consommeurs, and tasting to the full the joy of being alive, when a poor woman came up with a guitar, and tried to sing "Le petit mousse noir," a song Barty knew quite well—but she couldn't sing a bit, and nobody listened.

"Allons, Josselin, chante-nous ça!" said Berquin.

And Bonneville jumped up, and took the woman's guitar from her, and forced it into Josselin's hands, while the crowd became much interested and began to applaud.

Thus encouraged, Barty, who never in all his life knew what it is to be shy, stood up and piped away like a bird; and when he had finished the story of the little black cabin-boy who sings in the maintop halliards, the applause was so tremendous that he had to stand up on a chair and sing another, and yet another.

"Écoute-moi bien, ma Fleurette!" and "Amis, la matinee est belle!" (from *la Muette de Portici*), while the pavement outside the Variétés was rendered quite impassable by the crowd that gathered round to look and listen, and who all joined in the chorus—

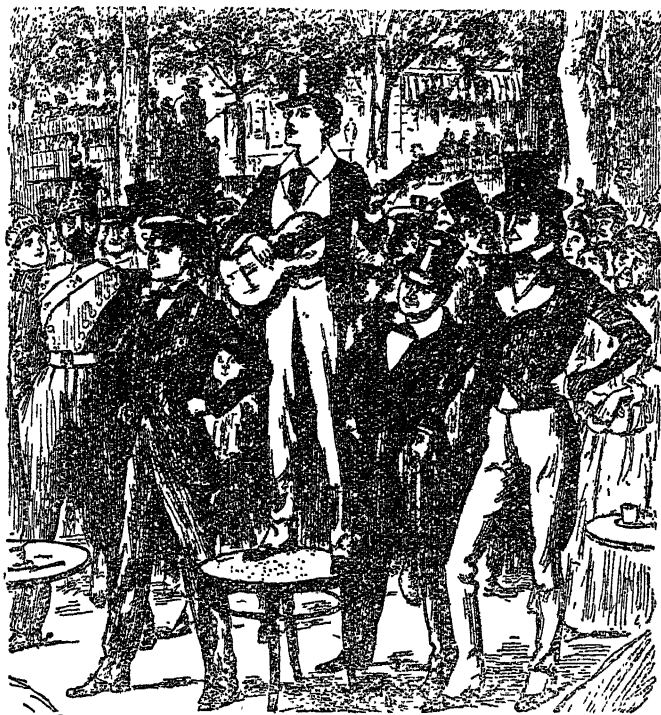
"Conduis ta barque avec prudence,
Pêcheur! parle bas!
Jette tes filets en silence
Pêcheur! parle bas!
Et le roi des mers ne nous échappera pas!" (bis)—

and the applause was deafening.

Meanwhile Bonneville and Berquin went round with the hat and gathered quite a considerable sum, in which there seemed to be almost as much silver as copper—and actually *two five-franc pieces and an English half-sovereign!* The poor woman wept with

gratitude at coming into such a fortune, and insisted on kissing Barty's hand. Indeed it was a quite wonderful ovation, considering how unmistakably British was Barty's appearance, and how unpopular we were in France just then!

He had his new shiny black silk chimney-pot hat on, and his Eton jacket, with the wide shirt collar. Berquin, in a tightly fitting double-breasted brown cloth swallow-tailed coat with brass buttons, yellow nankin bell-mouthed trousers strapped over varnished boots, butter-coloured gloves, a blue satin stock, and a very tall hairy hat with a wide curly brim, looked such an out-and-out young gentleman of France



"AMIS, LA MATINÉE EST BELLE"

that we were all proud of being seen in his company—especially young de Bonneville, who was still in mourning for his father, and wore a crape band round his arm, and a common cloth cap with a leather peak, and thick blucher boots; though he was quite sixteen, and already had a little black moustache like an eyebrow, and inhaled the smoke of his cigarette without coughing and quite naturally, and ordered the waiters about just as if he already wore the uniform of the École St.-Cyr, for which he destined himself (and was not disappointed. He should be a marshal of France by now—perhaps he is).

Then we went to the Café Mulhouse on the Boulevard des Italiens (on the "*Boul. des It.*," as we called it, to be in the fashion)—that we might gaze at Señor Joaquín Eliezegui, the Spanish giant, who was eight feet high and a trifle over (or under—I forget which)—he told us himself. Barty had a passion for gazing at very tall men—like Frederick the Great (or was it his Majesty's royal father?).

Then we went to the Boulevard Bonne-Nouvelle, where, in a painted wooden shed, a most beautiful Circassian slave, miraculously rescued from some abominable seraglio in Constantinople, sold pen'orths of "galette du gymnase." On her raven hair she wore a silk turban all over sequins, silver and gold, with a yashmak that fell down behind her, leaving her adorable face exposed; she had an amber vest of silk, embroidered with pearls as big as walnuts, and Turkish pantalettes—what her slippers were we could not see, but they must have been lovely, like all the rest of her. Barty had a passion for gazing at very beautiful female faces—like his father before him.

There was a regular queue of postulants to see this heavenly Eastern houri and buy her confection, which is very like Scotch butter-cake, but not so digestible; and even more filling at the price. And three of us sat on a bench, while three times Barty took his place in that procession—soldiers, sailors, workmen, chiffonniers, people of all sorts, women as many as men—all of them hungry for galette, but hungrier still for a good humanising stare at a beautiful female face; and he made the slow and toilsome journey to the little wooden booth three times—and brought us each a pen'orth on each return journey; and the third time, Katidjah (such was her sweet Oriental name) leaned forward over her counter and kissed him on both cheeks, and whispered in his ear (in English—and with the accent of Stratford-atte-Bowe)—

"You little *duck*! your name is *Brown*, I know!"

And he came away, his face pale with conflicting emotions, and told us!

How excited we were! Bonneville (who spoke English quite well) went for a pen'orth on his own account, and said, "My name's Brown too, Miss Katidjah!" But he didn't get a kiss.

(She soon after married a Mr. —, of —, the well-known — of —shire, in —land. She may be alive now.)

Then to the Palais Royal, to dine at the "Dîner Européen" with M. Berquin père, a famous engineer; and finally to stalls at the "Français" to see the two first acts of *Le Cid*; and this was rather an anticlimax—for we had too much "Cid" at the Institution F. Brossard already!

And then, at last, to the omnibus station in the Rue de Rivoli, whence the "Accélérées" (en correspondance avec les Constantines) started for Passy every ten minutes; and thus, up the gas-lighted Champs-Élysées, and by the Arc de Triomphe, to the Rond-point de l'Avenue de St.-Cloud; tired out, but happy—happy—happy *comme on ne l'est plus!*

Before the school broke up for the holidays there were very severe examinations—but no “distribution de prix”, we were above that kind of thing at Brossard’s, just as we were above wearing a uniform or taking in boarders.

Barty didn’t come off very well in this competition; but he came off, anyhow, much better than I, who failed to be “diligent and attentive”—too much *Monte Cristo*, I’m afraid.

At all events Barty got five marks for English History, because he remembered a good deal about Richard Cœur de Lion, and John and Friar Tuck, and Robin Hood, and especially one Cedric the Saxon, a historical personage of whom the examiner (a decorated gentleman from the Collège de France) had never even heard!

And then (to the tune of “Au clair de la lune”)—

“Vivent les vacances—
Denique tandem ;
 Et les pénitences—
Habebunt finem !
 Les pions intraitables,
Vultu Barbaro,
 S’en iront aux diables,
Gaudio nostrò.”

N.B.—The accent is always on the last syllable in French Latin—and *pion* means an usher.

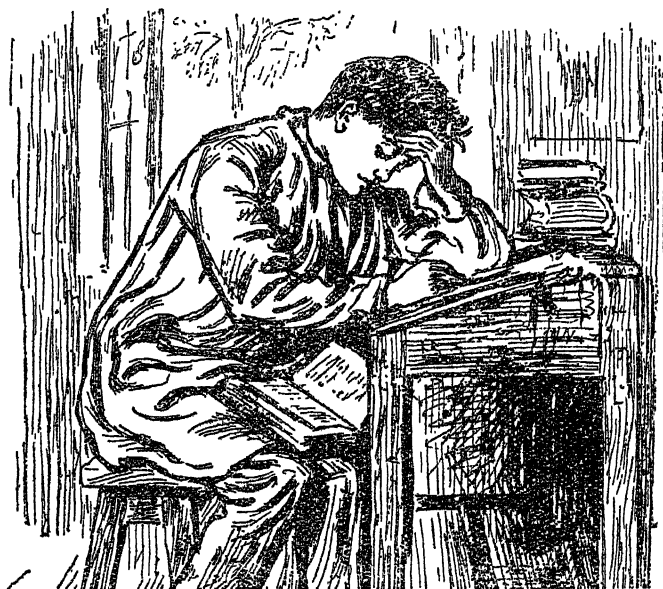
Barty went to Yorkshire with the Rohans, and I spent most of my holidays with my mother and sister (and the beautiful Miss ——) at Mademoiselle Jalabert’s, next door—coming back to school for most of my meals, and at night to sleep, with a whole dormitory to myself, and no dreadful bell at five in the morning; and so much time to spare that I never found any leisure for my holiday task, skeleton at the feast; no more did Jules the sergeant’s son; no more did Caillard, who spent his vacation at Brossard’s because his parents lived in Russia, and his “correspondant” in Paris was ill.

The only master who remained behind was Bonzig, who passed his time painting ships and sailors, in oil-colours; it was a passion with him: corvettes, brigantines, British whalers, fishing smacks, revenue-cutters, feluccas, caïques, even Chinese junks—all was fish that came to his net. He got them all from *La France Maritime*, an illustrated periodical much in vogue at Brossard’s; and also his storms and his calms, his rocks and piers and lighthouses—for he had never seen the sea he was so fond of. He took us every morning to the Passy swimming-baths, and in the afternoon for long walks in Paris, and all about and around, and especially to the Musée de Marine at the Louvre, that we might gaze with him at the beautiful models of three-deckers.

He evidently pitied our forlorn condition and told us delightful stories about seafaring life, like Mr. Clark Russell’s; and how he, some day, hoped to see the ocean for himself before he died—and with his own eyes.

I really don't know how Jules and Caillard would have got through the hideous *ennui* of that idle September without him. Even I, with my mother and sister and the beautiful Miss — within easy reach, found time hang heavily at times. One can't be always reading, even Alexandre Dumas; nor always loafing about, even in Paris, by one's self (Jules and Caillard were not allowed outside the gates without Bonzig); and beautiful English girls of eighteen, like Miss — —, don't always want a small boy dangling after them, and show it sometimes—which I thought very hard.

It was almost a relief when school started again in October, and the boys came back with their wonderful stories of the good time they



"TOO MUCH 'MONTE CRISTO,' I'M AFRAID"

had all had (especially some of the big boys, who were "en rhétorique et en philosophie")—and all the game that had fallen to their guns—wild-boars, roebucks, cerfs-dix-cors, and what not; of perilous swims in stormy seas—tremendous adventures in fishing-smacks on moonlight nights (it seemed that the moon had been at the full all through those wonderful six weeks); rides *ventre à terre* on mettlesome Arab steeds through gloomy wolf-haunted forests with charming female cousins; flirtations and "good fortunes" with beautiful but not happily married women in old mediæval castle keeps. *Toujours au clair de la lune!* They didn't believe each other in the least, these gay young romancers—nor expected to be believed themselves; but it was very exciting all the same; and they listened, and were

listened to in turn, without a gesture of incredulity—nor even a smile! And we small boys held our tongues in reverence and awe.

When Josselin came back he had wondrous things to tell too—but so preposterous that they disbelieved him quite openly, and told him so. How in London he had seen a poor woman so tipsy in the street that she had to be carried away by two policemen on a stretcher. How he had seen brewer's dray-horses nearly six feet high at the shoulder—and one or two of them with a heavy cavalry moustache drooping from its upper lip.

How he had been presented to the Lord Mayor of London, and even shaken hands with him, in Leadenhall Market, and that his Lordship was quite plainly dressed; and how English Lord Mayors were not necessarily "*hommes du monde*," nor always hand in glove with Queen Victoria!

Splendide mendax!

But they forgave him all his mendacity for the sake of a new accomplishment he had brought back with him, and which beat all his others. He could actually turn a somersault backwards with all the ease and finish of a professional acrobat. How he got to do this I don't know. It must have been natural to him and he never found it out before; he was always good at gymnastics, and all things that required grace and agility more than absolute strength.

Also he brought back with him (from Leadenhall Market, no doubt) a gigantic horned owl, fairly tame—and with eyes that reminded us of *le grand Bonzig's*.

School began, and with it the long evenings with an hour's play by lamp-light in the warm *salle d'études*; and the cold lamp-lit ninety minutes' preparation on an empty stomach, after the short perfunctory morning prayer—which didn't differ much from the evening one.

Barty was still *en cinquième*, at the top! and I at the tail of the class immediately above—so near and yet so far! so I did not have many chances of improving my acquaintance with him that term; for he still stuck to Laferté and Bussy-Rabutin—they were inseparable, those three.

At mid-day play-time the weather was too cold for anything but games, which were endless in their variety and excitement; and it would take a chapter to describe them.

It is a mistake to think that French schoolboys are (or were) worse off than ours in this. I will not say that any one French game is quite so good as cricket or football for a permanency; but I remember a great many that are very nearly so.

Indeed, French rounders (*la balle au camp*) seems to me the best game that ever was—on account of the quick rush and the struggle of the fielders to get home when an inside boy is hit between the bases, lest he should pick the ball up in time to hit one of them with it before the camp is reached; in which case there is a most exciting scrimmage for the ball, &c. &c.

Barty was good at all games, especially la balle au camp. I used to envy the graceful, easy way he threw the ball—so quick and straight, it seemed to have no curve at all in its trajectory; and how it bounded off the boy it nearly always hit between the shoulders!

At evening, play in the schoolroom, besides draughts and chess and backgammon; M. Bonzig, when *de service*, would tell us thrilling stories, with "la suite au prochain numéro" when the bell rang at 7.30; a long series that lasted through the winter of '47-'48. *Le Tueur de Daims*, *Le Lac Ontario*, *Le Dernier des Mohicans*, *Les Pionniers*, *La Prairie*—by one Fénimore Coupère; all of which he had read in M. Defauconpret's admirable translations. I have read some of them in their native American since then myself. I loved them always—but they seemed to lack some of the terror, the freshness, and the charm, his fluent utterance and solemn nasal voice put into them as he sat and smoked his endless cigarettes with his back against the big stone stove, and his eyes dancing sideways through his glasses. Never did that "ding-dang-dong" sound more hateful than when le grand Bonzig was telling the tale of Bas-de-cuir's doings, from his innocent youth to his noble and pathetic death by sunset, with his ever-faithful and still-serviceable but no longer deadly rifle (the friend of sixty years) lying across his knees. I quote from memory; what a gun that was!

Then on Thursdays, long walks, two by two, in Paris, with Bonzig or Dumollard; or else in the Bois to play rounders or prisoners' base in a clearing, or skate on the Mare aux Biches, which was always hard to find in the dense thicket . . . poor Lord Runswick! He found it once too often!

La Mare d'Auteuil was too deep, and too popular with "la flotte de Passy," as we called the Passy voyous, big and small, who came there in their hundreds, to slide and pick up quarrels with well-dressed and respectable schoolboys. Liberté—égalité—fraternité! ou la mort! Vive la république! (This, by the way, applies to the winter that came *next*.)

So time wore on with us gently; through the short vacation at New-Year's Day till the 23rd or 24th of February, when the Revolution broke out, and Louis Philippe premier had to fly for his life. It was a very troublous time, and the school for a whole week was in a state of quite heavenly demoralisation! Ten times a day, or in the dead of night, the drum would beat *le rappel* or *la générale*. A warm wet wind was blowing—the most violent wind I can remember that was not an absolute gale. It didn't rain, but the clouds hurried across the sky all day long, and the tops of the trees tried to bend themselves in two; and their leafless boughs and black broken twigs littered the deserted playground—for we all sat on the parapet of the terrace by the lingerie; boys and servants, le père et la mère Jaurion, Mlle. Marceline and the rest, looking towards Paris—all feeling bound to each other by a common danger, like wild beasts in a flood. Dear me! I'm out of breath from sheer pleasure in the remembrance.

One night we had to sleep on the floor for fear of stray bullets

and that was a fearful joy never to be forgotten—it almost kept us awake! Peering out of the schoolroom windows at dusk, we saw great fires three or four at a time. Suburban retreats of the over-wealthy, in full conflagration; and all day the rattle of distant musketry and the boom of the cannon a long way off, near Montmartre and Montfaucon, kept us alive.

Most of the boys went home, and some of them never came back—and from that day the school began to slowly decline. Père Brossard—an ancient “Brigand de la Loire,” as the republicans of his youth were called—was selected a representative of his native town at the Chamber of Deputies; and possibly that did the school more harm than good—*ne sutor ultra crepidam!* as he was so fond of impressing on *us*!

However, we went on pretty much as usual through spring and summer—with occasional alarms (which we loved), and beatings of *le rappel*—till the July insurrection broke out.

My mother and sister had left Mlle. Jalabert's and now lived with my father near the Boulevard Montmartre. And when the fighting was at its height they came to fetch me home, and invited Barty, for the Rohans were away from Paris. So home we walked, quite leisurely, on a lovely peaceful summer evening, while the muskets rattled and the cannons roared around us, but at a proper distance; women picking linen for lint and chatting genially the while at shop doors and porter's lodge-gates; and a piquet of soldiers at the corner of every street, who felt us all over for hidden cartridges before they let us through—it was all entrancing! The subtle scent of gunpowder was in the air—the most suggestive smell there can be. Even now, here in England, the night of the fifth of November never comes round but I am pleasantly reminded of the days when I was “*en pleine révolution*” in the streets of Paris with my father and mother, and Barty and my little sister—and genial *piou-pious* made such a conscientious examination of our garments. Nothing brings back the past like a sound or a smell—even those of a penny squib!

Every now and then a litter borne by soldiers came by, on which lay a dead or wounded officer. And then one's laugh died suddenly out, and one felt one's self face to face with the horrors that were going on.

Barty shared my bed, and we lay awake talking half the night; dreadful as it all was, one couldn't help being jolly! Every ten minutes the sentinel on duty in the court-yard below would sentimentally intone—

“*Sentinelles, prenez-garde à vous!*” And other sentinels would repeat the cry till it died away in the distance, like an echo.

And all next day, or the day after—or else the day after that, when the long rattle of the musketry had left off—we heard at intervals the “*feu de peloton*” in a field behind the church of St.-Vincent de Paul, and knew that at every discharge a dozen poor devils of insurgents, caught red-handed, fell dead in a pool of blood!

I need hardly say that before three days were over the irrepressible Barty had made a complete conquest of my small family. My sister (I hasten to say this) has loved him as a brother ever since; and as long as my parents lived, and wherever they made their home, that home has ever been his—and he has been their son—almost their eldest born, though he was younger than I by seven months.

Things have been reversed, however, for now thirty years and more; and his has ever been the home for me, and his people have been my people, and ever will be—and the God of his worship mine!

What children and grandchildren of my own could ever be to me as these of Barty Josselin's?

"Ce sacré Josselin—il avait tous les talents!"

And the happiest of these gifts, and not the least important, was the gift he had of imparting to his offspring all that was most brilliant and amiable and attractive in himself, and leaving in them unimpaired all that was strongest and best in the woman I loved as well as he did, and have loved as long—and have grown to look upon as belonging to the highest female type that can be; for doubtless the Creator, in His infinite wisdom, might have created a better and a nicer woman than Mrs. Barty Josselin that was to be, had He thought fit to do so; but doubtless also He never did.

Alas! the worst of us is that the best of us are those that want the longest knowing to find it out.

My kind-hearted but cold-mannered and undemonstrative Scotch father, evangelical, a total abstainer, with a horror of tobacco—surely the austerest dealer in French wines that ever was—a puritanical hater of bar sinisters, and profligacy, and Rome, and rank, and the army, and especially the stage—he always lumped them together more or less—a despiser of all things French, except their wines, which he never drank himself—remained devoted to Barty till the day of his death; and so with my dear congenial mother, whose heart always yearned towards serious boys who worked hard at school and college, and passed brilliant examinations, and got scholarships and fellowships in England, and state sinecures in France, and married early, and let their mothers choose their wives for them, and train up their children in the way they should go. She had lived so long in France that she was Frencher than the French themselves.

And they both loved good music—Mozart, Bach, Beethoven—and were almost priggish in their contempt for anything of a lighter kind, especially with a lightness of English or French! It was only the musical lightness of Germany they could endure at all! But whether in Paris or London, enter Barty Josselin, idle schoolboy, or dandy dissipated guardsman, and fashionable man about town, or bohemian art student; and Bach, lebewohl! good-bye, Beethoven! bonsoir le bon Mozart! all was changed: and welcome, instead, the last comic song from the Château des Fleurs, or Evans's in Covent

Garden; the latest patriotic or sentimental ditty by Loïsa Puget, or Frédéric Bérat, or Eliza Cook, or Mr. Henry Russell.

And then, what would Barty like for breakfast, dinner, supper after the play, and which of all those burgundies would do Barty good without giving him a headache next morning? and where was Barty to have his smoke?—in the library, of course. "Light the fire in the library, Mary; and Mr. Bob [that was me] can smoke there, too, instead of going outside," &c., &c., &c. It is small wonder that he grew a bit selfish at times.

Though I was a little joyous now and then, it is quite without a shadow of bitterness or envy that I write all this. I have lived for fifty years under the charm of that genial, unconscious, irresistible tyranny; and, unlike my dear parents, I have lived to read and know Barty Josselin, nor merely to see and hear and love him for himself alone.

Indeed, it was quite impossible to know Barty at all intimately and not do whatever he wanted you to do. Whatever he wanted, he wanted so intensely, and at once; and he had such a droll and engaging way of expressing that hurry and intensity, and especially of expressing his gratitude and delight when what he wanted was what he got, that you could not for the life of you hold your own! *Tout vient à qui ne sait pas attendre!*

Besides which, every now and then, if things didn't go quite as he wished, he would fly into comic rages, and become quite violent and intractable for at least five minutes, and for quite five minutes more he would silently sulk; and then, just as suddenly, he would forget all about it, and become once more the genial, affectionate, and caressing creature he always was.

But this is going ahead too fast! revenons. At the examinations this year Barty was almost brilliant, and I was hopeless as usual; my only consolation being that after the holidays we should at last be in the same class together, *en quatrième*, and all through this hopelessness of mine!

Laferté was told by his father that he might invite two of his schoolfellows to their country-house for the vacation, so he asked Josselin and Bussy-Rabutin. But Bussy couldn't go—and to my delight, I went instead.

That ride all through the sweet August night, the three of us on the impérial of the five-horsed diligence, just behind the conductor and the driver—and freedom, and a full moon, or nearly so—and a tremendous saucisson de Lyon (à l'ail, bound in silver paper)—and petits pains—and six bottles of bière de Mars—and cigarettes ad libitum, which of course we made ourselves!

The Lafertés lived in the Department of La Sarthe, in a delightful country-house, with a large garden sloping down to a transparent stream, which had willows and alders and poplars all along both its banks, and a beautiful country beyond.

Outside the grounds (where there were the old brick walls, all

overgrown with peaches and pears and apricots, of some forgotten mediæval convent) was a large farm; and close by a water-mill that never stopped.

A road, with thick hedgerows on either side, led to a small and very pretty town called La Tremblaye, three miles off. And hard by the garden gates began the big forest of that name: one heard the stags calling and the owls hooting, and the fox giving tongue as it hunted the hares at night. There might have been wolves and wild-boars. I like to think so very much.

M. Laferté was a man of about fifty—entre les deux âges; a retired maître de forges, or iron-master, or else the son of one—I forget which. He had a charming wife and two pretty little daughters, Jeanne et Marie, aged fourteen and twelve.

He seldom moved from his country home, which was called "Le Gué des Aulnes," except to go shooting in the forest; for he was a great sportsman and cared for little else. He was of gigantic stature—six foot six or seven, and looked taller still, as he had a very small head and high shoulders. He was not an Adonis, and could only see out of one eye—the other (the left one, fortunately) was fixed as if it were made of glass—perhaps it was—and this gave him a stern and rather forbidding expression of face.

He had just been elected Mayor of La Tremblaye, beating the Comte de la Tremblaye by many votes. The Comte was a royalist and not popular. The republican M. Laferté (who was immensely charitable and very just) was very popular indeed, in spite of a morose and gloomy manner. He could even be violent at times, and then he was terrible to see and hear. Of course his wife and daughters were gentleness itself, and so was his son, and everybody who came into contact with him. *Si vis pacem, para bellum*, as Père Brossard used to impress upon us.

It was the strangest country-household I have ever seen, in France or anywhere else. They were evidently very well off, yet they preferred to eat their mid-day meal in the kitchen, which was immense; and so was the mid-day meal—and of a succulency! . . .

An old wolf-hound always lay by the huge log fire, often with two or three fidgety cats fighting for the soft places on him and making him growl; five or six other dogs, non-sporting, were always about at meal-time.

The servants—three or four peasant women, who waited on us—talked all the time; and were *tutoyées* by the family. Farm-labourers came in and discussed agricultural matters, manures, &c., quite informally, squeezing their bonnets de coton in their hands. The postman sat by the fire and drank a glass of cider and smoked his pipe up the chimney while the letters were read—most of them out loud—and were commented upon by everybody in the most friendly spirit. All this made the meal last a long time.

M. Laferté always wore his blouse—except in the evening, and then he wore a brown woollen vareuse, or jersey; unless there were

guests, when he wore his Sunday morning best. He nearly always spoke like a peasant, although he was really a decently educated man—or should have been.

His old mother, who was of good family and eighty years of age, lived in a quiet humble cottage in a small street in La Tremblaye, with two little peasant girls to wait on her; and the La Tremblayes, with whom M. Laferté was not on speaking terms, were always coming into the village to see her and bring her fruit and flowers and game. She was a most accomplished old lady, and an excellent musician, and had known Monsieur de Lafayette.

We breakfasted with her when we alighted from the diligence at six in the morning; and she took such a fancy to Barty that her own grandson was almost forgotten. He sang to her, and she sang to him, and showed him autograph letters of Lafayette, and a lock of her hair when she was seventeen, and old-fashioned miniatures of her father and mother, Monsieur and Madame de something I've quite forgotten.

M. Laferté kept a pack of bassets (a kind of bow-legged beagle), and went shooting with them every day in the forest, wet or dry; sometimes we three boys with him. He lent us guns—an old single-barrelled flint-lock cavalry musket or carbine fell to my share; and I knew happiness such as I had never known yet.

Barty was evidently not meant for a sportsman. On a very warm August morning, as he and I squatted "*à l'affût*" at the end of a long straight ditch outside a thicket which the bassets were hunting, we saw a hare running full tilt at us along the ditch, and we both fired together. The hare shrieked, and turned a big somersault and fell on its back and kicked convulsively—its legs still galloping—and its face and neck were covered with blood; and, to my astonishment, Barty became quite hysterical with grief at what he had done. It's the only time I ever saw him cry.

"*Caïn! Caïn! qu'as-tu fait de ton frère?*" he shrieked again and again, in a high voice, like a small child's—like the hare's.

I calmed him down and promised I wouldn't tell, and he recovered himself and bagged the game—but he never came out shooting with us again! So I inherited his gun, which was double-barrelled.

Barty's accomplishments soon became the principal recreation of the Laferté ladies; and even M. Laferté himself would start for the forest an hour or two later or come back an hour sooner to make Barty go through his bag of tricks. He would have an arm-chair brought out on the lawn after breakfast and light his short black pipe and settle the programme himself.

First, "*le saut périlleux*"—the somersault backwards—over and over again, at intervals of two or three minutes, so as to give himself time for thought and chuckles, while he smoked his pipe in silent stodgy jubilation.

Then two or three songs—they would be stopped, if M. Laferté didn't like them, after the first verse, and another one started instead; and if it pleased him, it was encored two or three times.

Then pen and ink and paper were brought, and a small table and a kitchen chair, and Barty had to draw caricatures, of which M. Laferté chose the subject.

"Maintenant, fais-moi le profil de mon vieil ami M. Bonzig, que j' n' connais pas, que j' n'ai jamais vu, mais q' j'aime beaucoup." (Now do me the side face of my old friend M. Bonzig, whom I don't know, but am very fond of.)

And so on for twenty minutes.

Then Barty had to be blindfolded and twisted round and round, and point out the north—when he felt up to it.

Then a pause for reflection.

Then: "Dis-moi qué'q' chose en anglais."

"How do you do very well hey diddle-diddle Chichester church in Chichester churchyard!" says Barty.

"Qué'q' ça veut dire?"

"Il s'agit d'une église et d'un cimetière!" says Barty, rather sadly, with a wink at me.

"C'est pas gai! Qué vilaine langue, hein? J' suis joliment content que j' sais pas l' anglais, moi!" (It's not lively! What a beastly language, eh? I'm precious glad I don't know English.)

Then: "Démontre-moi un problème de géométrie."

Barty would then do a simple problem out of Legendre (the French Euclid), and M. Laferté would look on with deep interest and admiration, but evidently no comprehension whatever. Then he would take the pen himself, and draw a shapeless figure, with A's and B's and C's and D's stuck all over it in impossible places, and quite at hazard, and say—

"Démontre-moi que $A+B$ est plus grand que $C+D$." It was mere idiotic nonsense, and he didn't know better!

But Barty would manage to demonstrate it all the same, and M. Laferté would sigh deeply, and exclaim, "C'est joliment beau, la géométrie!"

Then: "Danse!"

And Barty danced "la Paladine," and did Scotch reels and Irish jigs and break-downs of his own invention, amidst roars of laughter from all the family.

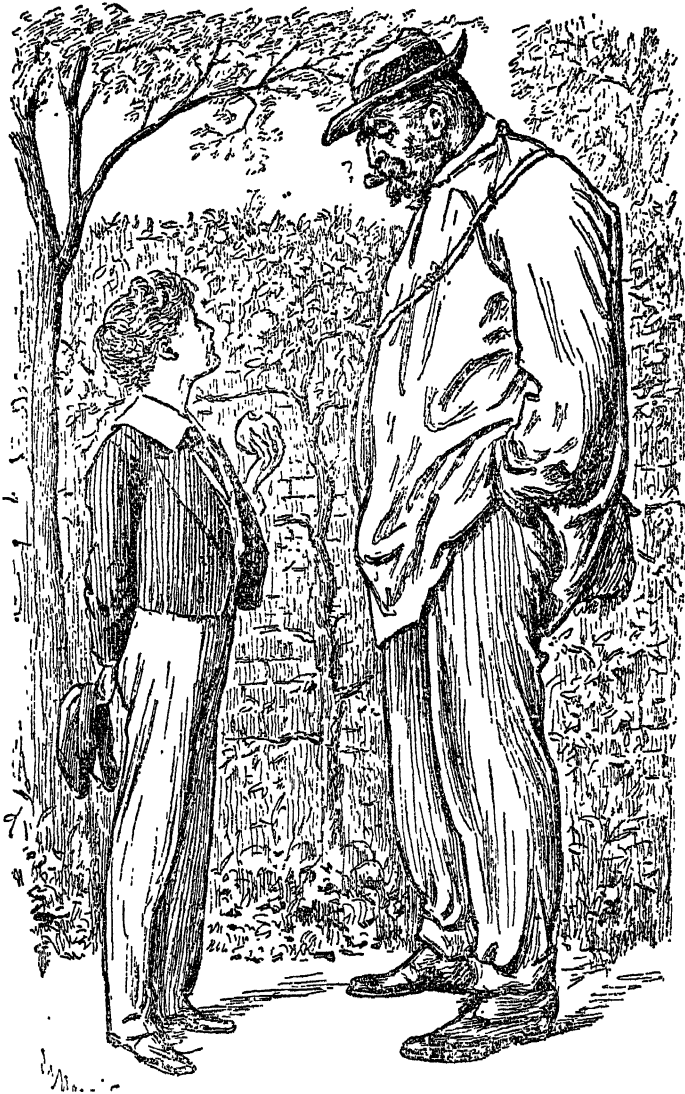
Finally the gentlemen of the party went down to the river for a swim; and old Laferté would sit on the bank and smoke his brûle-gueule, and throw carefully selected stones for Barty to dive after, and feel he'd scored off Barty when the proper stone wasn't found, and roar in his triumph. After which he would go and pick the finest peach he could find, and peel it with his pocket-knife very neatly, and when Barty was dressed, present it to him with a kindly look in both eyes at once.

"Mange-moi ça—ça t' fera du bien!"

"Then suddenly: 'Pourquoi q' tu n'aimes pas la chasse? t'as pas peur, j'espère!'" (Why don't you like shooting? You're not afraid, I hope!)

“Sais pas,” said Josselin; “don’t like killing things, I suppose.”

So Barty became quite indispensable to the happiness and comfort of Père Polyphème, as he called him, as well as of his amiable family.



LE PÈRE POLYPHÈME

On the 1st of September there was a grand breakfast in honour of the partridges (not in the kitchen this time), and many guests were invited; and Barty had to sing and talk and play the fool all through breakfast, and got very tipsy, and had to be put to bed for the rest of

the day. It was no fault of his, and Madame Laferté declared that "ces messieurs" ought to be ashamed of themselves, and watched over Barty like a mother. He has often declared he was never quite the same after that debauch—and couldn't feel the north for a month.

The house was soon full of guests, and Barty and I slept in M. Laferté's bedroom—his wife in a room adjoining.

Every morning old Polyphemus would wake us up by roaring out—

"Hé! ma femme!"

"Voilà, voilà, mon ami!" from the next room.

"Viens, vite panser mon cautère!"

And in came Madame L. in her dressing-gown, and dressed a blister he wore on his big arm.

Then: "Café!"

And coffee came, and he drank it in bed.

Then: "Pipe!"

And his pipe was brought and filled, and he lit it.

Then: "Josselin!"

"Oui, M'sieur Laferté."

"Tire moi une gamme."

"Dorémifasollasido—Dosilasolfamirédo!" sang Josselin, up and down, in beautiful tune, with his fresh bird-like soprano.

"Ah! q' ça fait du bien!" says M. L.; then a pause, and puffs of smoke and grunts and sighs of satisfaction.

"Josselin?"

"Oui, M'sieur Laferté!"

"La brune Thérèse!"

And Josselin would sing about the dark-haired Thérèse—three verses.

"Tu as changé la fin du second couplet—tu as dit '*des comtesses*' au lieu de dire '*des duchesses*'—recommence!" (You changed the end of the second verse—you said "countesses" instead of "duchesses"—begin again.)

And Barty would re-sing it as desired, and bring in the duchesses.

"Maintenant, 'Colin, disait Lisette!'"

And Barty would sing that charming little song, most charmingly:—

"'Colin,' disait Lisette,
'Je voudrais passer l'eau!
Mais je suis trop pauvrete
Pour payer le bateau!
'Entrez, entrez, ma belle!
Entrez, entrez toujours!
Et vogue la nacelle
Qui porte mes amours!'"

And old L. would smoke and listen with an air of heavenly beatitude almost pathetic.

"Elle était bien gentille, Lisette—n'est-ce pas, petiot?—recommence!" (She was very nice, Lisette; wasn't she, sonny?—begin again!)

"Now both get up and wash and go to breakfast. Come here, Josselin—you see this little silver dagger" (producing it from under his pillow). "It's rather pointy, but not at all dangerous. My mother gave it me when I was just your age—to cut books with. It's for you. Allons, file! [cut along] no thanks!—but look here—are you coming with us à la chasse to-day?"

"Non, M. Laferté."

"Pourquoi?—t'as pas peur, j'espère!"

"Sais pas. J' n'aime pas les choses mortes—ça saigne—et ça n'sent pas bon—ça m' fait mal au cœur." (Don't know. I'm not fond of dead things. They bleed—and they don't smell nice—it makes me sick.)

And two or three times a day would Barty receive some costly token of this queer old giant's affection, till he got quite unhappy about it. He feared he was despoiling the House of Laferté of all its treasures in silver and gold; but he soothed his troubled conscience later on by giving them all away to favourite boys and masters at Brossard's—especially M. Bonzig, who had taken charge of his white mouse (and her family, now quite grown up—children and grandchildren and all) when Mlle. Marceline went for her fortnight's holiday. Indeed he had made a beautiful cage for them out of wood and wire, with little pasteboard mangers (which they had nibbled away).

Well, the men of the party and young Laferté and I would go off with the dogs and keepers into the forest; and Barty would pick filberts and fruit with Jeanne and Marie, and eat them with bread-and-butter and jam and *cerneaux* (unripe walnuts mixed with salt and water and verjuice—quite the nicest thing in the world). Then he would find his way into the heart of the forest, which he loved, and where he had scraped up a warm friendship with some charcoal-burners, whose huts were near an old yellow-watered pond, very brackish and stagnant and deep, and full of leeches and water-spiders. It was in the densest part of the forest, where the trees were so tall and leafy that the sun never fell on it, even at noon. The charcoal burners told him that in '93 a young *de la Tremblaye* was taken there at sunset to be hanged on a giant oak-tree—but he talked so agreeably and was so pleasant all round that they relented, and sent for bread and wine and cider and made a night of it, and didn't hang him till dawn next day; after which they tied a stone to his ankles and dropped him into the pond, which was called "the pond of the respite" ever since; and his young wife, Claire Elisabeth, drowned herself there the week after, and their bones lie at the bottom to this very day.

And, ghastly to relate, the ringleader in this horrible tragedy was a beautiful young woman, a daughter of the people, it seems—one *Séraphine Doucet*, whom the young viscount had betrayed before marriage—*le droit du seigneur!*—and but for whom he would have been let off after that festive night. Ten or fifteen years later,

smitten with incurable remorse, she hanged herself on the very branch of the very tree where they had strung up her noble lover; and still walks round the pond at night, wringing her hands and wailing. It's a sad story—let us hope it isn't true.

Barty Josselin evidently had this pond in his mind when he wrote in "Âmes en peine":—

Sous la berge hantée
L'eau morne croupit—
Sous la sombre futaie
Le renard glapit,
Et le cerf-dix-cors brame, et les daims viennent boire à l'Étang du Répit.
"Lâchez-moi, Loupgaroux!"

Que sinistre est la mare
Quand tombe la nuit;
La chouette s'effare—
Le blaireau s'enfuit!
L'on y sent que les morts se réveillent—qu'une ombre sans nom vous poursuit.
"Lâchez-moi, Loupgaroux!"

Forêt! forêt! what a magic there is in that little French dissyllable! Morne forêt! Is it the lost "s", and the heavy "a" that makes up for it, which lend such a mysterious and gloomy fascination?

Forest! that sounds rather tame—almost cheerful! If we want a forest dream we have to go so far back for it, and dream of Robin Hood and his merrie men! and even then Epping forces itself into our dream—and even Chingford, where there was never a werewolf within the memory of man. Give us at least the *virgin* forest, in some far Guyana or Brazil—or even the forest primeval—

"... where the murmuring pines and the hemlocks,
Bearded with moss and in garments green, indistinct in the twilight,
Stand like druids of eld, with voices sad and prophetic,
Stand like harpers hoar"—

that we may dream of scalp-hunting Mingoes, and grizzly bears, and moose, and buffalo, and the beloved Bas-de-cuir with that magic rifle of his, that so seldom missed its mark and never got out of repair.

"Prom'nons-nous dans les bois
Pendant que le loup n'y est pas. . . ."

That's the first song I ever heard. Céline used to sing it, my nurse—who was very lovely, though she had a cast in her eye, and wore a black cap, and cotton in her ears, and was pitted with the smallpox. It was in Burgundy, which was rich in forests, with plenty of wolves in them, and wild-boars too—and that was only a hundred years ago, when that I was a little tiny boy. It's just an old nursery rhyme to lull children to sleep with, or set them dancing—*pas aut' chose*—but there's a deal of old France in it!

There I go again—digressing as usual, and quoting poetry, and trying to be literary and all that! *C'est plus fort que moi. . . .*

One beautiful evening after dinner we went, the whole lot of us, fishing for crayfish in the meadows beyond the home farm.

As we set about waiting for the crayfish to assemble round the bits of dead frog that served for bait and were tied to the wire scales (which were left in the water), a procession of cows came past us from the farm. One of them had a wound in her flank—a large tumour.

"It's the bull who did that," said Marie. "Il est très méchant!"

Presently the bull appeared, following the herd in sulky dignity. We all got up and crossed the stream on a narrow plank—all but Josselin, who remained sitting on a camp-stool.



FANFARONNADE

"Josselin! Josselin! venez donc! il est très mauvais, le taureau!" Barty didn't move.

The bull came by; and suddenly, seeing him, walked straight to within a yard of him—and stared at him for five minutes at least, lashing its tail. Barty didn't stir. Our hearts were in our mouths!

Then the big brindled brute turned quietly round with a friendly snort and went after the cows—and Barty got up and made it a courtly farewell salute, saying, "Bon voyage—au plaisir!"

After which he joined the rest of us across the stream, and came in for a good scolding and much passionate admiration from the ladies, and huggings and tears of relief from Madame Laferté.

"I knew well he wouldn't be afraid!" said M. Laferté; "they are all like that, those English—le sang froid du diable! nom d'un Vellington! It is we who were afraid—we are not so brave as the little Josselin! plucky little Josselin! But why did you not come with us? Temerity is not valour, Josselin!"

"Because I wanted to show off [*faire le fanfaron*]!" said Barty, with extreme simplicity.

"Ah, diable! Anyhow, it was brave of you to sit still when he came and looked at you in the white of the eyes! it was just the right thing to do; ces Anglais! je n'en reviens pas! À quatorze ans! hein, ma femme?"

"Pardi!" said Barty, "I was in such a blue funk [j'avais une venette si bleue] that I couldn't have moved a finger to save my life!"

At this, old Polyphemus went into a Homeric peal of laughter.

"Ces Anglais! what originals—they tell you the real truth at any cost [ils vous disent la vraie vérité, coûte que coûte]!" and his affection for Barty seemed to increase, if possible, from that evening.

Now this was Barty all over—all through life. He always gave himself away with a liberality quite uncalled for—so he ought to have some allowances made for that reckless and impulsive indiscretion which caused him to be so popular in general society, but got him into so many awkward scrapes in after-life, and made him such mean enemies, and gave his friends so much anxiety and distress.

(And here I think it right to apologise for so much translating of such a well-known language as French; I feel quite like another Ollendorf—who must have been a German, by-the-way—but M. Laferté's grammar and accent would sometimes have puzzled Ollendorf himself!)

Towards the close of September, M. Laferté took it into his head to make a tour of provincial visits *en famille*. He had never done such a thing before, and I really believe it was all to show off Barty to his friends and relations.

It was the happiest time I ever had, and shines out by itself in that already so unforgettably delightful vacation.

We went in a large charabancs drawn by two stout horses, starting at six in the morning, and driving right through the Forest of la Tremblaye; and just ahead of us, to show us the way, M. Laferté driving himself in an old cabriolet with Josselin (from whom he refused to be parted) by his side, singing or talking, according to order, or cracking jokes; we could hear the big laugh of Polyphemus!

We travelled very leisurely; I forget whether we ever changed horses or not—but we got over a good deal of ground. We put up at the country houses of friends and relations of the Lafertés; and visited old historical castles and mediæval ruins—Châteaudun and others—and fished in beautiful pellucid tributaries of the Loire—shot over "des chiens anglais"—danced half the night with charming people—wandered in lovely parks and woods, and beautiful old formal gardens with fishponds, terraces, statues, marble fountains; charmilles, pelouses, quinconces; and all the flowers and all the fruits of France! And the sun shone every day and all day long—and in one's dreams all night.

And the peasants in that happy country of the Loire spoke the most beautiful French and had the most beautiful manners in the world. They're famous for it.

It all seems like a fairy tale.

If being made much of, and petted and patted and admired and wondered at, make up the sum of human bliss, Barty came in for as full a share of felicity during that festive week as should last an ordinary mortal for a twelvemonth. *Figaro quâ, Figaro là*, from morning till night in three departments of France!

But he didn't seem to care very much about it all; he would have been far happier singing and tumbling and romancing away to his charbonniers by the pond in the Forest of la Tremblaye. He declared he was never quite himself unless he could feel the north for at least an hour or two every day, and all night long in his sleep—and that he should never feel the north again—that it was gone for ever; that he had drunk it all away at that fatal breakfast—and it made him lonely to wake up in the middle of the night and not know which way he lay! “*dépaysé*,” as he called it—“*désorienté—perdu!*”

And laughing, he would add, “*Ayez pitié d'un pauvre orphelin!*”

Then back to Le Gué des Aulnes. And one evening, after a good supper at Grandmaman Laferté's, the diligence de Paris came jingling and rumbling through the main street of La Tremblaye, flashing right and left its two big lamps, red and blue. And we three boys, after the most grateful and affectionate farewells, packed ourselves into the coupé, which had been retained for us, and rumbled back to Paris through the night.

There was quite a crowd to see us off. Not only Lafertés, but others—all sorts and conditions of men, women, and children—and among them three or four of Barty's charcoal-burning friends; one of whom, an old man with magnificent black eyes and an immense beard, that would have been white if he hadn't been a charcoal-burner, kissed Barty on both cheeks, and gave him a huge bag full of some kind of forest berry that is good to eat; also a young cuckoo (which Barty restored to liberty an hour later); also a dormouse and a large green lizard; also, in a little pasteboard box, a gigantic pale green caterpillar four inches long and thicker than your thumb, with a row of shiny blue stars in relief all along each side of its back—the most beautiful thing of the kind you ever saw.

“*Pioche bien ta géométrie, mon bon petit Josselin! c'est la plus belle science au monde, crois-moi!*” said M. Laferté to Barty, and gave him the hug of a grizzlybear; and to me he gave a terrific hand-squeeze, and a beautiful double-barrelled gun by Lefauchaux, for which I felt too supremely grateful to find suitable thanks. I have it now, but I have long given up killing things with it.

I had grown immensely fond of this colossal old “*bourru bien-faisant*,” as he was called in La Tremblaye, and believe that all his moroseness and brutality were put on, to hide one of the warmest, simplest, and tenderest hearts in the world.

Before dawn Barty woke up with such a start that he woke me:

"Enfin! ça y est! quelle chance!" he exclaimed.

"Quoi, quoi, quoi?" said I, quacking like a duck.

"Le nord—c'est revenu—it's just ahead of us—a little to the left!"

We were nearing Paris.

And thus ended the proudest and happiest time I ever had in my life. Indeed I almost had an adventure on my own account—*une bonne fortune*, as it was called at Brossard's by boys hardly older than myself. I did not brag of it, however, when I got back to school.

It was at "Les Laiteries," or "Les Poteries," or "Les Crucherics," or some such place, the charming abode of Monsieur et Madame Péliisson—only their name wasn't Péliisson, or anything like it. At dinner I sat next to a Miss——, who was very tall and wore blond side ringlets. I think she must have been the English governess.

We talked very much together, in English; and after dinner we walked in the garden together by starlight arm in arm, and she was so kind and genial to me in English that I felt quite chivalrous and romantic, and ready to do doughty deeds for her sake.

Then at M. Péliisson's request, all the company assembled in a group for evening prayer, under a spreading chestnut-tree on the lawn: the prayer sounded very much like the morning or evening prayer at Brossard's, except that the Almighty was addressed as "toi" instead of "vous;" it began:

"Notre Père qui es aux cieus—toi dont le regard scrutateur pénètre jusque dans les replis les plus profonds de nos coeurs"—and ended, "Ainsi soit-il!"

The night was very dark, and I stood close to Miss ——, who stood as it seemed with her hands somewhere behind her back. I was so grateful to her for having talked to me so nicely, and so fond of her for being English, that the impulse seized me to steal my hand into hers—and her hand met mine with a gentle squeeze which I returned; but soon the pressure of her hand increased, and by the time M. Cluré had got to "au nom du Père" the pressure of her hand had become an agony—a thing to make one shriek!

"Ainsi soit-il!" said M. le Curé, and the little group broke up, and Miss —— walked quietly indoors with her arm around Madame Péliisson's waist, and without even wishing me good-night—and my hand was being squeezed worse than ever.

"Ah ha! Lequel de nous deux est volé, petit coquin?" hissed an angry voice in my ear—(which of us two is sold, you little rascal?)

And I found my hand in that of Monsieur Péliisson, whose name was something else—and I couldn't make it out, nor why he was so angry. It has dawned upon me since that each of us took the other's hand by mistake for that of the English governess!

All this is beastly and cynical and French, and I apologise for it—but it's true.

October!

It was a black Monday for me when school began again after that ideal vacation. The skies they were ashen and sober, and the leaves they were crisped and sere. But anyhow I was still *en quatrième*, and Barty was in it too—and we sat next to each other in “L’étude des grands.”

There was only one étude now; only half the boys came back, and the pavillon des petits was shut up, study, class-rooms, dormitories, and all—except that two masters slept there still.

Eight or ten small boys were put in a small school-room in the same house as ours, and had a small dormitory to themselves, with M. Bonzig to superintend them.

I made up my mind that I would no longer be a *cancre* and a *crétin*, but work hard and do my little best, so that I might keep up with Barty and pass into the *troisième* with him, and then into *Rhétorique* (seconde), and then into *Philosophie* (première)—that we might do our humanities and take our degree together—our “*Bachot*”, which is short for *Baccalauréat-ès-lettres*. Most especially did I love Monsieur Durosier’s class of French Literature—for which Mérovée always rang the bell himself.

My mother and sister were still at Ste.-Adresse, Hâvre, with my father; so I spent my first Sunday that term at the Archibald Rohans’, in the Rue du Bac.

I had often seen them at Brossard’s when they came to see Barty, but had never been at their house before.

They were very charming people.

Lord Archibald was dressing when we got there that Sunday morning, and we sat with him while he shaved—in an immense dressing-room where there were half-a-dozen towel-horses with about thirty pairs of newly ironed trousers on them instead of towels, and quite thirty pairs of shiny boots on trees were ranged along the wall. James, an impeccable English valet, waited on “his lordship”, and never spoke unless spoken to.

“Hullo, Barty! Who’s your friend?”

“Bob Maurice, Uncle Archie.”

And Uncle Archie shook hands with me most cordially.

“And how’s the North pole this morning?”

“Nicely, thanks, Uncle Archie.”

Lord Archibald was a very tall and handsome man, about fifty—very droll and full of anecdote; he had stories to tell about everything in the room.

For instance, how Major Welsh of the 10th Hussars had given him that pair of Wellingtons, which fitted him better than any boots Hoby ever made him to measure; they were too tight for poor Welsh, who was a head shorter than himself.

How Kerlewis made him that frock-coat fifteen years ago, and it wasn’t threadbare yet, and fitted him as well as ever—for he hadn’t changed his weight for thirty years, &c.

How that pair of braces had been made by "my lady" out of a pair of garters she wore on the day they were married.

And then he told us how to keep trousers from bagging at the knees, and how cloth coats should be ironed, and how often—and how to fold an umbrella.



MÉROVÉE RINGS THE BELL

It suddenly occurs to me that perhaps these little anecdotes may not be so amusing to the general reader as they were to me when he told them, so I won't tell any more. Indeed, I have often noticed that things look sometimes rather dull in print that were so surprisingly witty when said in spontaneous talk a great many years ago!

Then we went to breakfast with my lady and Daphne, their charming little daughter—Barty's sister, as he called her—"m'amour"—and who spoke both French and English equally well.

But we didn't breakfast at once, ravenous as we boys were, for Lady Archibald took a sudden dislike to Lord A.'s cravat, which, it seems, he had never worn before. It was brown satin, and Lady A. declared that Loulou (so she called him) never looked "*en beauté*" with a brown cravat; and there was quite a little quarrel between husband and wife on the subject—so that he had to go back to his dressing-room and put on a blue one.

At breakfast he talked about French soldiers of the line, and their marching kit (as it would be called now), quite earnestly, and, as it seemed to me, very sensibly—though he went through little mimicries that made his wife scream with laughter, and me too; and in the middle of breakfast Barty sang "*Le Chant du Départ*" as well as he could for laughing:

"La victoire en chantant nous ouvre la carrière!
La liberté-é gui-i-de nos pas" . . .

while Lord A. went through an expressive pantomime of an overladen foot-soldier up and down the room, in time to the music. The only person who didn't laugh was James—which I thought ungenial.

Then Lady A. had *her* innings, and sang "*Rule Britannia, Britannia rule de vaves*"—and declared it was far more ridiculous really than the "*Chant du Départ*," and she made it seem so, for she went through a pantomime too. She was a most delightful person, and spoke English quite well when she chose; and seemed as fond of Barty as if he were her only son—and so did Lord Archibald. She would say:

"Quel dommage qu'on ne peut pas avoir des cromptettes [crumpets]! Barty les aime tant! n'est ce pas, mon chou, tu aimes bien les cromptettes? voici venir du buttered toast—c'est toujours ça!"

And, "Mon Dieu, comme il a bonne mine, ce cher Barty—n'est-ce pas, mon amour, que tu as bonne mine? regarde-tois dans la glace."

And, "Si nous allions à l'Hippodrome cette après-midi voir la belle écuyère Madame Richard? Barty adore les jolies femmes, comme son oncle! n'est ce pas, méchant petit Barty, que tu adores les jolies femmes? et tu n'as jamais vu Madame Richard? Tu m'en diras des nouvelles! et vous, mon ami [this to me], est-ce que vous adorez aussi les jolies femmes?"

"Ô oui," says Daphne, "allons voir M'ame Richard; it'll be *such* fun! oh, bully!"

So after we went for a walk, and to a café on the Quai d'Orsay, and then to the Hippodrome, and saw the beautiful écuyère in graceful feats of la haute école, and lost our hearts—especially Lord Archibald, though him she knew; for she kissed her hand to him, and he his to her.

Then we dined at the Palais Royal, and afterwards went to the Café des Aveugles, an underground coffee-house near the Café de la Rotonde, and where blind men made instrumental music; and we had a capital evening.

I have met in my time more intellectual people, perhaps, than the Archibald Rohans—but never people more amiable, or with kinder simpler manners, or who made one feel more quickly and thoroughly at home—and the more I got to know them, the more I grew to like them; and their fondness for each other and Daphne, and for Barty too, was quite touching; as was his for them. So the winter sped happily till February, when a sad thing happened.

I had spent Sunday with my mother and sister, who now lived on the ground-floor of 108 Champs Élysées.

I slept there that Sunday night, and walked back to school next morning. To my surprise, as I got to a large field through which a diagonal footpath led to Père Jaurion's loge, I saw five or six boys sitting on the terrace parapet with their legs dangling outside. They should have been in class by rights. They watched me cross the field, but made no sign.

"What on earth *can* be the matter?" thought I.

The cordon was pulled, and I came on a group of boys all stiff and silent.

"Qu'est-ce que vous avez donc, tous?" I asked.

"Le Père Brossard est mort!" said De Villars.

Poor M. Brossard had died of apoplexy on the previous afternoon. He had run to catch the Passy omnibus directly after lunch, and had fallen down in a fit and died immediately.

"Il est tombé du haut mal"—as they expressed it.

His son Mérovée and his daughter Madame Germain were distracted. The whole of that day was spent by the boys in a strange, unnatural state of *désœuvrement* and suppressed excitement for which no outlet was possible. The meals, especially, were all but unbearable. One was ashamed of having an appetite, and yet one had—almost keener than usual, if I may judge by myself—and for some undiscovered reason the food was better than on other Mondays!

Next morning we all went up in sorrowful procession to kiss our poor dear head-master's cold fore-head as he lay in his bed, with sprigs of boxwood on his pillow, and above his head a jar of holy water with which we sprinkled him. He looked very serene and majestic, but it was a harrowing ceremony. Mérovée stood by with swollen eyes and deathly pale—incarnate grief.

On Wednesday afternoon M. Brossard was buried in the Cimetière de Passy, a tremendous crowd following the hearse; the boys and masters just behind Mérovée and M. Germain, the chief male mourners. The women walked in another separate procession behind.

Béranger and Alphonse Karr were present among the notabilities; and speeches were made over his open grave, for he was a very distinguished man.

And, tragical to relate, that evening in the study Barty and I fell out, and it led to a stand-up fight next day.

There was no preparation that evening; he and I sat side by side reading out of a book by Châteaubriand—either *Atala*, or *René* or *Les Natchez*, I forget which. I have never seen either since.

The study was hushed; M. Dumollard was *de service* as *maître d'études*, although there was no attempt to do anything but sadly read improving books.

If I remember aright, René, a very sentimental young Frenchman, who had loved the wrong person not wisely, but too well (a very wrong person indeed, in this case), emigrated to North America, and there he met a beautiful Indian maiden, one Atala, of the Natchez tribe, who had rosy heels and was charming, and whose entire skin was probably a warm dark red, although this was not insisted upon. She also had a brother, whose name was Outogamiz.

Well, René loved Atala, Atala loved René, and they were married; and Outogamiz went through some ceremony besides, which made him blood brother and bosom friend to René—a bond which involved certain obligatory rites and duties and self-sacrifices.

Atala died and was buried. René died and was buried also; and every day, as in duty bound, poor Outogamiz went and pricked a vein and bled over René's tombe, till he died himself of exhaustion before he was many weeks older. I quote entirely from memory.

This simple story was told in very touching and beautiful language, by no means telegraphese, and Barty and I were deeply affected by it.

"I say, Bob!" Barty whispered to me with a break in his voice, "some day I'll marry your sister, and we'll all go off to America together, and she'll die, and I'll die, and you shall bleed yourself to death on my tomb!"

"No," said I, after a moment's thought. "No—look here! I'll marry *your* sister, and I'll die, and you shall bleed over *my* tomb!"

Then, after a pause—

"I haven't got a sister, as you know quite well—and if I had she wouldn't be for *you*!" says Barty.

"Why not?"

"Because you're not good-looking enough!" says Barty.

At this, just for fun, I gave him a nudge in the wind with my elbow—and he gave me a "twisted pinch" on the arm—and I kicked him on the ankle, but so much harder than I intended that it hurt him, and he gave me a tremendous box on the ear, and we set to fighting like a couple of wild-cats, without even getting up, to the scandal of the whole study and the indignant disgust of M. Dumollard, who separated us, and read us a pretty lecture:

"Voilà bien les Anglais!—rien n'est sacré pour eux, pas même la mort! rien que les chiens et les chevaux." (Nothing, not even death, is sacred to Englishmen—nothing but dogs and horses.)

When we went up to bed the head-boy of the school—a first-rate boy called d'Orthez, and Berquin (another first-rate boy), who had each

a bedroom to himself, came into the dormitory and took up the quarrel, and discussed what should be done. Both of us were English—*ergo*, both of us ought to box away the insult with our fists; so “they set a combat us between, to fecht it in the dawning”—that is, just after breakfast, in the schoolroom.

I went to bed very unhappy, and so, I think did Barty.

Next morning at six, just after the morning prayer, M. Mérovée came into the schoolroom and made us a most straightforward, manly, and affecting speech; in which he told us he meant to keep on the school, and thanked us, boys and masters, for our sympathy.

We were all moved to our very depths—and sat at our work solemn and sorrowful all through that lamp-lit hour and a half: we hardly dared to cough, and never looked up from our desks.

Then 7.30—ding-dang-dong and breakfast. Thursday—bread-and-butter morning!

I felt very hungry and greedy and very sad, and disinclined to fight. Barty and I had sat turned away from each other, and made no attempt at reconciliation.

We all went to the réfectoire: it was raining fast. I made my ball of salt and butter, and put it in a hole in my hunk of bread, and ran back to the study, where I locked these treasures in my desk.

The study soon filled with boys: no masters ever came there during that half-hour; they generally smoked and read their newspapers in the gymnastic ground, or else in their own rooms when it was wet outside.

D’Orthez and Berquin moved one or two desks and forms out of the way so as to make a ring—*l’arène*, as they called it—with comfortable seats all round. Small boys stood on forms and window-sills eating their bread-and-butter with a tremendous relish.

“Dites donc, vous autres,” says Bonneville, the wit of the school, who was in very high spirits; “it’s like the Roman Empire during the decadence—*panem et circenses!*”

“What’s that, *circenses*? what does it mean?” says Rapaud, with his mouth full.

“Why, *butter*, you idiot! Didn’t you know *that*?” says Bonneville.

Barty and I stood opposite each other; at his sides as seconds were d’Orthez and Berquin; at mine, Jolivet trois (the only Jolivet now left in the school) and big du Tertre-Jouan (the young marquis who wasn’t Bonneville).

We began to spar at each other in as knowing and English a way as we knew how—keeping a very respectful distance indeed, and trying to bear ourselves as scientifically as we could, with a keen expression of the eye.

When I looked into Bart’s face I felt that nothing on earth would ever make me hit such a face as that—whatever he might do to mine. My blood wasn’t up; besides, I was a course-grained, thick-set, bullet-headed little chap with no nerves to speak of, and didn’t mind punishment the least bit. No more did Barty, for that matter,

though he was the most highly-wrought creature that ever lived.

At length they all got impatient, and d'Orthez said:

"Allez donc, godems—ce n'est pas un quadrille! Nous n'sommes pas à La Salle Valentino!"

And Barty was pushed from behind so roughly that he came at me, all his science to the winds and slogging like a French boy; and I, quite without meaning to, in the hurry, hit out just as he fell over me, and we both rolled together over Jolivet's foot—Barty on top (he was taller, though not heavier, than I); and I saw the blood flow from his nose down his lip and chin, and some of it fell on my blouse.

Says Barty to me, in English, as we lay struggling on the dusty floor—

"Look here, it's no good. I *can't* fight to-day; poor Mérovée, you know. Let's make it up!"

"All right!" says I. So we got up and shook hands, Barty saying, with mock dignity—

"Messieurs, le sang a coulé; l'honneur britannique est sauf;" and the combat was over.

"Cristi! J'ai joliment faim!" says Barty, mopping his nose with his handkerchief. "I left my crust on the bench outside the réfectoire. I wish one of you fellows would get it for me."

"Rapaud finished your crust [ta miche] while you were fighting," says Jolivet. "I saw him."

Says Rapaud: "Ah, Dame, it was getting prettily wet, your crust, and I was prettily hungry too; and I thought you didn't want it, naturally."

I then produced *my* crust and cut it in two, butter and all, and gave Barty half, and we sat very happily side by side, and breakfasted together in peace and amity. I never felt happier or hungrier.

"Cristi, comme ils se sont bien battus," says little Vaissière to little Cormenu. "As-tu vu? Josselin a saigné tout plein sur la blouse à Maurice." (How well they fought! Josselin bled all over Maurice's blouse!)

Then says Josselin, in French, turning to me with that delightful jolly smile that always reminded one of the sun breaking through a mist—

"I would sooner bleed on your blouse than on your tomb." (J'aime mieux saigner sur ta blouse que sur ta tombe.)

So ended the only quarrel we ever had.

PART THIRD

"Que ne puis-je aller où s'en vont les roses,
Et n'attendre pas
Ces regrets navrants que la fin des choses
Nous garde ici-bas!"—ANON

BARTY worked very hard, and so did I—for *me*! Horace—Homer—Æschylus—Plato—&c., &c., &c., &c., &c., and all there was to learn in that French school-boys' encyclopædia—"Le Manuel du Baccalauréat;" a very thick book in very small print. And I came to the conclusion that it is good to work hard: it makes one enjoy food and play and sleep so keenly—and Thursday afternoons.

The school was all the pleasanter for having fewer boys; we got more intimate with each other, and with the masters too. During the winter M. Bonzig told us capital stories—*Modeste Mignon*, by Balzac—*Le Chevalier de Maison-rouge*, by A. Dumas père—&c., &c.

In the summer the Passy swimming-bath was more delightful than ever. Both winter and summer we passionately fenced with a pupil (un prévôt) of the famous M. Bonnet, and did gymnastics with M. Louis, the gymnastic master of the College Charlemagne—the finest man I ever saw—a gigantic dwarf six feet high, all made up of lumps of sinew and muscles, like

Also, we were taught equitation at the riding-school in the Rue Duphot.

On Saturday nights Barty would draw a lovely female profile, with a beautiful big black eye, in pen and ink, and carefully shade it; especially the hair, which was always as the raven's wing! And on Sunday morning he and I used to walk together to 108 Champs Élysées, and enter the rez-de-chaussée (where my mother and sister lived) by the window, before my mother was up. Then Barty took out his lovely female pen-and-ink profile to gaze at, and rolled himself a cigarette and lit it, and lay back on the sofa, and made my sister play her lightest music—"La pluie de Perles," by Osborne—and "Indiana," a beautiful valse by Marcaillhou—and thus combine three or four perfect blisses in one happy quart d'heure.

Then my mother would appear, and we would have breakfast—after which Barty and I would depart by the window as we had come, and go to do our bit of Boulevard and Palais Royal. Then to the Rue de Bac for another breakfast with the Rohans; and then, "*au petit bonheur*;" that is, trusting to Providence for whatever turned up. The programme didn't vary very much: either I dined with him at the Rohans', or he with me at 108. Then back to Brossard's at ten—tired and happy.

One Sunday I remember well we stayed in school, for old Josselin

the fisherman came to see us there—Barty's grandfather, now a widower; and M. Mérovée asked him to lunch with us, and go to the baths in the afternoon.

Imagine old Bonzig's delight in this "*vieux loup de mer*," as he called him! That was a happy day for the old fisherman too; I shall never forget his surprise at M. Dumollard's telescope—and how clever he was on the subject.

He came to the baths, and admired and criticised the good swimming of the boys—especially Barty's, which was really remarkable. I don't believe he could swim a stroke himself.

Then we went and dined together at Lord Archibald's in the Rue du Bac—"Mon Colonel," as the old fisherman always called him. He was a very humorous and intelligent person, this fisher, though nearer eighty than seventy; very big, and of a singularly picturesque appearance—for he had not *endimanché* himself in the least; and very clean. A splendid old man; oddly enough, somewhat Semitic of aspect—as though he had just come from a miraculous draught of fishes in the Sea of Galilee, out of a cartoon by Raphael!

I recollect admiring how easily and pleasantly everything went during dinner, and all through the perfection of this ancient sea-toiler's breeding in all essentials.

Of course the poor all over the world are less nice in their habits than the rich, and less correct in their grammar and accent, and narrower in their views of life; but in every other aspect there seemed little to choose between Josselins and Rohans and Lonlay-Savignacs; and indeed, according to Lord Archibald, the best manners were to be found at these two opposite poles—or even wider still. He would have it that Royalty and chimney-sweeps were the best-bred people all over the world—because there was no possible mistake about their social status.

I felt a little indignant—after all, Lady Archibald was built out of chocolate, for all her Lonlay and her Savignac! just as I was built out of Beaune and Chambertin.

I'm afraid I shall be looked upon as a snob and a traitor to my class if I say that I have at last come to be of the same opinion myself. That is, if absolute simplicity, and the absence of all possible temptation to try and seem an inch higher up than we really are — But there! this is a very delicate question, about which I don't care a straw; and there are such exceptions, and so many, to confirm any such rule!

Anyhow, I saw how Barty *couldn't help* having the manners we all so loved him for. After dinner Lady Archibald showed old Josselin some of Barty's lovely female profiles—a sight that affected him strangely. He would have it that they were all exact portraits of his beloved Antoinette, Barty's mother.

They were certainly singularly like each other, these little chefs-d'œuvre of Barty's and singularly handsome—an ideal type of his own; and the old grandfather was allowed his choice, and touchingly grateful at being presented with such treasures.

The scene made a great impression on me.

So spent itself that year—a happy year that had no history—except for one little incident that I will tell because it concerns Barty, and illustrates him.

One beautiful Sunday morning the yellow omnibus was waiting for some of us as we dawdled about in the schoolroom, titivating; the masters nowhere, as usual on a Sunday morning; and some of the boys began to sing in chorus a not very edifying *chanson*, which they did not “Bowdlerise,” about a holy Capucin friar; it began (if I remember rightly):

“C’était un Capucin, oui bien, un père Capucin,
 Qui confessait trois filles—
 Itou, itou, itou, là là là!
 Qui confessait trois filles
 Au fond de son jardin—
 Oui bien—
 Au fond de son jardin!
 Il dit à la plus jeune—
 Itou, itou, itou, là là là!
 Il dit à la plus jeune
 . . ‘Vous reviendrez demain!’ ”
 &c., &c., &c.

I have quite forgotten the rest.

Now this little song, which begins so innocently, like a sweet old idyl of mediæval France—*un écho du temps passé*—seems to have been a somewhat Rabelaisian ditty; by no means proper singing for a Sunday morning in a boys’ school. But boys will be boys even in France; and the famous “esprit Gaulois” was somewhat precocious in the forties, I suppose. Perhaps it is now, if it still exists (which I doubt—the dirt remains, but all the fun seems to have evaporated).

Suddenly M. Dumollard bursts into the room in his violent sneaky way, pale with rage, and says—

“Je vais gifler tous ceux qui ont chanté” (I’ll box the ears of every boy who sang).

So he puts all in a row and begins—

“Rubinel, sur votre parole d’honneur, avez-vous chanté?”

“Non, m’sieur.”

“Caillard, avez-vous chanté?”

“Non, m’sieur.”

“Lipmann, avez-vous chanté?”

“Non m’sieur.”

“Maurice, avez-vous chanté?”

“Non, m’sieur” (which, for a wonder, was true, for I happened not to know either the words or the tune).

“Josselin, avez-vous chanté?”

“Oui, m’ sieur !”

And down went Barty his full length on the floor, from a tremend-

ous open-handed box on the ear. Dumollard was a very herculean person—though by no means gigantic.

Barty got up and made Dumollard a polite little bow, and walked out of the room.

"Vous êtes tous consignés!" says M. Dumollard—and the omnibus went away empty, and we spent all that Sunday morning as best we might.

In the afternoon we went out walking in the Bois. Dumollard had recovered his serenity and came with us; for he was *de service* that day.

Says Lipmann to him—

"Josselin drapes himself in his English dignity—he sulks like Achilles and walks by himself."

"Josselin is at least a *man*," says Dumollard. "He tells the truth, and doesn't know fear—and I'm sorry he's English!"

And later, in the Mare d'Auteuil, he put out his hand to Barty and said—

"Let's make it up, Josselin—au moins vous avez du cœur, vous. Promettez-moi que vous ne chanterez plus cette sale histoire de Capucin!"

Josselin took the usher's hand, and smiled his open, toothy smile, and said—

"Pas le dimanche matin toujours—quand c'est vous qui serez de service, M. Dumollard!" (Anyhow not Sunday morning when you're on duty, Mr. D.)

And Mr. D. left off running down the English in public after that—except to say that they *couldn't* be simple and natural if they tried; and that they affected a ridiculous accent when they spoke French—not Josselin and Maurice, but all the others he had ever met. As if plain French, which had been good enough for William the Conqueror, wasn't good enough for the subjects of her Britannic Majesty to-day!

The only event of any importance in Barty's life that year was his first communion, which he took with several others about his own age. An event that did not seem to make much impression on him—nothing seemed to make much impression on Barty Josselin when he was very young. He was just a lively, irresponsible, irrepressible human animal—always in perfect health and exuberant spirits, with an immense appetite for food and fun and frolic; like a squirrel, a collie pup, or a kitten.

Père Bonamy, the priest who confirmed him, was fonder of the boy than of any one, boy or girl, that he had ever prepared for communion, and could hardly speak of him with decent gravity, on account of his extraordinary confessions—all of which were concocted in the depths of Barty's imaginations for the sole purpose of making the kind old curé laugh; and the kind old curé was just as fond of laughing as was Barty of playing the fool, in and out of season. I wonder if he always thought himself bound to respect the secrets of the confessional in Barty's case!

And Barty would sing to him—even in the confessional—

“Stabat mater dolorosa
Juxta crucem lachrymosa
Dum pendebat filius” . . .

in a voice so sweet and innocent and pathetic that it would almost bring the tears to the good old curé's eye-lash.

“Ah! ma chère Mamzelle Marceline!” he would say,—“au moins s'ils étaient tous comme ce petit Josselin! ça irait comme sur des roulettes! Il est innocent comme un jeune veau, ce mioche anglais! Il a le bon Dieu dans le cœur!”

“Et une boussole dans l'estomac!” said Mlle. Marceline.

I don't think he was quite so innocent as all that, perhaps—but no young beast of the field was ever more *harmless*.

That year the examinations were good all round; even I did not disgrace myself, and Barty was brilliant. But there were no delightful holidays for me to record. Barty went to Yorkshire, and I remained in Paris with my mother.

There is only one thing more worth mentioning that year.

My father had inherited from *his* father a system of shorthand, which he called *Blaze*—I don't know why! *His* father had learnt it of a Dutch Jew.

It is, I think, the best kind of cipher ever invented (I have taken interest in these things and studied them). It is very difficult to learn, but I learnt it as a child—and it was of immense use to me at lectures we used to attend at the Sorbonne and Collège de France.

Barty was very anxious to know it, and after some trouble I obtained my father's permission to impart this calligraphic crypt to Barty, on condition he should swear on his honour never to reveal it: and this he did.

With his extraordinary quickness and the perseverance he always had when he wished a thing very much, he made himself a complete master of this occult science before he left school, two or three years later: it took *me* seven years—beginning when I was four! It does equally well for French or English, and it played an important part in Barty's career. My sister knew it, but imperfectly; my mother not at all—for all she tried so hard and was so persevering: it must be learnt young. As far as I am aware, no one else knows it in England or France—or even the world—although it is such a useful invention; quite a marvel of simple ingenuity when one has mastered the symbols, which certainly take a long time and a deal of hard work.

Barty and I got to talk it on our fingers as rapidly as ordinary speech, and with the slightest possible gestures: this was *his* improvement.

Barty came back from his holiday full of Whitby and its sailors and whalers, and fishermen and cobbles and cliffs—all of which had evidently had an immense attraction for him. He was always

fond of that class; possibly also some vague atavistic sympathy for the toilers of the sea lay dormant on his blood like inherited memory.

And he brought back many tokens of these good people's regard—two formidable clasp-knives (for each of which he had to pay the giver one farthing in current coin of the realm); spirit-flasks, leather bottles, jet ornaments; woollen jerseys and comforts knitted for him by their wives and daughters; fossil ammonites and coprolites; a couple of young sea-gulls to add to his menagerie; and many old English marine ditties, which he had to sing to M. Bonzig with his now cracked voice, and then translate into French. Indeed, Bonzig and Barty became inseparable companions during the Thursday promenade, on the strength of their common interest in ships and the sea; and Barty never wearied of describing the place he loved, nor Bonzig of listening and commenting.

"Ah! mon cher! ce que je donnerais, moi, pour voir le retour d'un baleinier à Ouittebé! Quelle 'marine' ça ferait! hein? avec la grande falaise, et la bonne petite église en haut, près de la Vieille Abbaye—et les toits rouges qui fument, et les trois jetées en pierre, et les vieux pont-levis—et toute cette grouille de mariniers avec leurs femmes et leurs enfants—et ces braves filles qui attendent le retour du bien-aimé! nom d'un nom! dire que vous avez vu tout ça vous—qui n'avez pas encore seize ans . . . quelle chance! . . . dites—qu'est-ce que ça veut bien dire, ce

'Ouille mé sekile rô!'

Chantez-moi ça encore une fois!"

And Barty, whose voice was breaking, would raucously sing him the good old ditty for the sixth time—

"Weel may the keel row, the keel row, the keel row,
Weel may the keel row,
That brings my laddie home!"

which he would find rather difficult to render literally into colloquial seafaring French!

He translated it thus—

"Vogue la carène,
Vogue la carène,
Qui me ramène
Mon bien aimé!"

"Ah! vous verrez," says Bonzig—"vous verrez, aux prochaines vacances de Pâques —je ferai un si joli tableau de tout ça! avec la brume du soir qui tombe, vous savez —et le soleil qui disparaît—et la marée qui monte et la lune qui se lève à l' horizon! et les mouettes et les goëlands—et les bruyères lointaines—et le vieux manoir seigneurial de votre grand-père . . . c'est bien ça, n'est-ce pas?"

"Oui, oui, M'sieur Bonzig—vous y êtes, en plein!"

And the good usher in his excitement would light himself a cigarette of caporal, and inhale the smoke as if it were a sea-breeze, and exhale it like a regular sou'-wester! and sing—

"Ouille—mé—sekile rô,
Tat brinn my laddé ôme!"

Barty also brought back with him the complete poetical works of Byron and Thomas Moore, the gift of his noble grandfather, who adored these two bards to the exclusion of all other bards



"WEEL MAY THE KEEL ROW"

that ever wrote in English. And during that year we both got to know them, possibly as well as Lord Whitby himself. Especially "Don Juan," in which we grew to be as word-perfect as in *Polyeucte*, *Le*

Misanthrope, Athalie, Philoctète, Le Lutrín, the first six books of the *Æneid* and the *Iliad*, the *Ars Poetica*, and the *Art Poétique* (Boileau.)

Every line of these has gone out of my head—long ago, alas! But I could stand a pretty severe examination in the now all but forgotten English epic—from Dan to Beersheba—I mean from “I want a hero” to “The phantom of her frolic grace, Fitz-Fulke!”

Barty, however, remembered everything—what he ought to, and what he ought not! He had the most astounding memory: wax to receive and marble to retain; also a wonderful facility for writing verse, mostly comic, both in English and French. Greek and Latin verse were not taught us at Brossard’s for good French reasons, which I will not enter now.

We also grew very fond of Lamartine and Victor Hugo, quite openly—and of De Musset under the rose.

“C’était dans la nuit brune
Sur le clocher jauni,
La lune,
Comme un point sur son il”

(not for the young person).

I have a vague but pleasant impression of that year. Its weathers, its changing seasons, its severe frosts, with Sunday skatings on the dangerous canals, St. Ouen and De l’Ourcq; its genial spring, all convolvulus and gobéas, and early almond blossom and later horse-chestnut spikes, and more lime and syringa than ever; its warm soft summer and the ever-delightful school of natation by the Isle of Swans.

This particular temptation led us into trouble. We would rise before dawn, Barty and Jolivet and I, and let ourselves over the wall and run the two miles, and get a heavenly swim and a promise of silence for a franc a piece; and run back again and jump into bed a few minutes before the five-o’clock bell rang the réveillée.

But we did this once too often—for M. Dumollard had been looking at Venus with his telescope (I *think* it was Venus) one morning before sunrise, and spied us out *en flagrant délit*; perhaps with that very telescope. Anyhow, he pounced on us when we came back. And our punishment would have been extremely harsh but for Barty, who turned it all into a joke.

After breakfast M. Mérovée pronounced a very severe sentence on us under the acacia. I forget what it was—but his manner was very short and dignified, and he walked away very stiffly towards the door of the étude. Barty ran after him without noise, and just touching his shoulders with the tips of his fingers, cleared him at a bound from behind, as one clears a post.

M. Mérovée in a *real* rage this time, forgot his dignity, and pursued him all over the school—through open windows and back again—into his own garden (Tusculum)—over trellis railings—all along the top of a wall—and finally, quite blown out, sat down on the edge of the tank: the whole school was in fits by this time, even M.

Dumollard—and at last Mérovée began to laugh too. So the thing had to be forgiven—but only that once!

Once also, that year, but in the winter, a great compliment was paid to la perfide Albion in the persons of MM. Josselin et Maurice, which I cannot help recording with a little complacency.

On a Thursday walk in the Bois de Boulogne a boy called out "A bas Dumollard!" in a falsetto squeak. Dumollard, who was on duty that walk, was furious of course—but he couldn't identify the boy by the sound of his voice. He made his complaint to M. Mérovée—and next morning, after prayers, Mérovée came into the school-room, and told us he should go the round of the boys there and then, and ask each boy separately to own up if it were he who had uttered the seditious cry.

"And mind you!" he said—"you are all and each of you on your 'word of honour'—*l'étude entière!*"

So round he went, from boy to boy, deliberately fixing each boy with his eye, and severely asking—"Est-ce toi?" "Est-ce toi?" Est-ce toi?" &c., and waiting very deliberately indeed for the answer, and even asking for it again if it were not given in a firm and audible voice. And the answer was always, "Non, M'sieur, ce n'est pas moi!"

But when he came to each of us (Josselin and me), he just mumbled his "Est-ce toi?" in a perfunctory voice, and didn't even wait for the answer!

When he got to the last boy of all, who said "Non, m'sieur," like all the rest, he left the room, saying tragically (and, as I thought, rather theatrically for him)—

"Je m'en vais le coeur navré—il y a un lâche parmi vous!" (My heart is harrowed—there's a coward among you.)

There was an awkward silence for a few moments.

Presently Rapaud got up and went out. We all knew that Rapaud was the delinquent—he had bragged about it so—overnight in the dormitory. He went straight to M. Mérovée and confessed, stating that he did not like to be put on his word of honour before the whole school. I forget whether he was punished or not, or how. He had to make his apologies to M. Dumollard, of course.

To put the whole school on its word of honour was thought a very severe measure, coming as it did from the head-master in person. "La parole d'honneur" was held to be very sacred between boy and boy, and even between boy and head-master. The boy who broke it was always "mis à la quarantaine" (sent to Coventry) by the rest of the school.

"I wonder why he let off Josselin and Maurice so easily?" said Jolivet at breakfast.

"Parce qu'il aime les Anglais, ma foi!" said M. Dumollard—"affaire de goût!"

"Ma foi, il n'a pas tort!" said M. Bonzig.

Dumollard looked askance at Bonzig (between whom and himself not much love was lost) and walked off, jauntily twirling his

moustache, and whistling a few bars of a very ungainly melody, to which the words ran—

“Non! jamais en France,
Jamais Anglais ne règnera!”

As if we wanted to, good heavens!

(By-the-way, I suddenly remember that both Berquin and d’Orthez were let off as easily as Josselin and I. But they were eighteen or nineteen, and “en Philosophie,” the highest class in the school—and very first-rate boys indeed. It’s only fair that I should add this.)

By-the-way, also, M. Dumollard took it into his head to persecute me because once I refused to fetch and carry for him and be his “moricaud,” or black slave (as du Tertre-Jouan called it): a mean and petty persecution which lasted two years, and somewhat embitters my memory of those happy days. It was always “Maurice, au piquet pour une heure!” “Maurice à la retenue!” “Maurice privé de bain!” “Maurice consigné dimanche prochain!” for the slightest possible offence. But I forgive him freely.

First, because he is probably dead, and “de mortibus nil desperandum!” as Rapaud once said—and for saying which he received a “twisted pinch” from Mérovée Brossard himself.

Secondly, because he made chemistry, cosmography, and physics so pleasant—and even reconciled me at last to the differential and integral calculus (but never Barty!)

He could be rather snobbish at times, which was not a common French fault in the forties—we didn’t even know what to call it.

For instance, he was fond of bragging to us boys about the golden splendours of his Sunday dissipation, and his grand acquaintances, even in class. He would even interrupt himself in the middle of an equation at the blackboard to do so.

“You mustn’t imagine to yourselves, messieurs, that because I teach you boys science at the Pension Brossard, and take you out walking on Thursday afternoons, and all that, that I do not associate *avec des gens du monde!* Last night, for example, I was dining at the Café de Paris with a very intimate friend of mine—he’s a marquis—and when the bill was brought, what do you think it came to? you give it up?” (vous donnez votre langue aux chats?). “Well, it came to fifty-seven francs fifty centimes! We tossed up who should pay—et, ma foi, le sort a favorisé M. le Marquis!”

To this there was nothing to say; so none of us said anything, except du Tertre-Jouan, our marquis (No. 2), who said, in his sulky, insolent, peasant-like manner—

“Et comment q’ça s’appelle, vot’ marquis?” (What does it call itself, your marquis?)

Upon which M. Dumollard turns very red (“pique un soleil”), and says—

“Monsieur le Marquis Paul—François—Victor du Tertre-Jouan

de Haultcastel de St. Paterne, vous êtes un paltoquet et un rustre!...

And goes back to his equations.

Du Tertre-Jouan was nearly six feet high, and afraid of nobody—a kind of clodhopping young rustic Hercules, and had proved his mettle quite recently—when a brutal usher, whom I will call Monsieur Boulot (though his real name was Patachou), a Méridional with a horrible divergent squint, made poor Rapaud go down on



A TERTRE-JOUAN TO THE RESCUE!

his knees in the classe de géographie ancienne, and slapped him violently on the face twice running—a way he had with Rapaud.

It happened like this. It was a kind of penitential class for dunces during play-time. M. Boulot drew in chalk an outline of ancient Greece on the blackboard, and under it he wrote—

“Timeo Danaos, et dona ferentes!”

“Rapaud, translate me that line of Virgil!” says Boulot.

“J’estime les Danois et leurs dents de fer!” says poor Rapaud (I esteem the Danish and their iron teeth). And we all laughed. For which he underwent the brutal slapping.

The window was ajar, and outside I saw du Tertre-Jouan, Jolivet, and Berquin listening and peeping through. Suddenly the window

bursts wide open, and du Tertre-Jouan vaults the sill, gets between Boulot and his victim, and says—

"Le troisième coup fait feu, vous savez! touchez-y encore, à ce moutard, et j'vous assomme sur place!" (Touch him again, that kid, and I'll break your head where you stand!)

There was an awful row, of course—and du Tertre-Jouan had to make a public apology to M. Boulot, who disappeared from the



MADemoiselle MARCELINE

school the very same day; and Tertre-Jouan would have been canonised by us all, but that he was so deplorably dull and narrow-minded, and suspected of being a royalist in disguise. He was an orphan and very rich, and didn't fash himself about examinations. He left school that year without taking any degree—and I don't know what became of him.

This year also Barty conceived a tender passion for Mlle. Marceline.

It was after the mumps, which we both had together in a double-bedded infirmerie next to the lingerie—a place where it was a

pleasure to be ill; for she was in and out all day, and told us all that was going on, and gave us nice drinks and tisanes of her own making—and laughed at all Barty's jokes, and some of mine! and wore the most coquettish caps ever seen.

Besides, she was an uncommonly good-looking woman—a tall blonde with beautiful teeth, and wonderfully genial, good-humoured, and lively—an ideal nurse, but a terrible postponer of cures! Lord Archibald quite fell in love with her.

"C'est moi qui voudrais bien avoir les oreillons ici!" he said to her. "Je retarderais ma convalescence autant que possible!"

"Comme il sait bien le français, votre oncle—et comme il est poli!" said Marceline to the convalescent Barty, who was in no hurry to get well either!

When we did get well again, Barty would spend much of his play-time fetching and carrying for Mlle. Marceline—even getting Dumollard's socks for her to darn—and talking to her by the hour as he sat by her pleasant window, out of which one could see the Arch of Triumph, which so triumphantly dominated Paris and its suburbs, and does so still—no Eiffel Tower can kill that arch!

I, being less precocious, did not begin my passion for Mlle. Marceline till next year, just as Bonneville and Jolivet trois were getting over theirs. Nous avons tous passé par là!

What a fresh and kind and jolly woman she was, to be sure! I wonder none of the masters married her. Perhaps they did! Let us hope it wasn't M. Dumollard!

It is such a pleasure to recall every incident of this epoch of my life and Barty's that I should like to go through our joint lives day by day, hour by hour, microscopically—to describe every book we read, every game we played, every *pensum* (i.e., imposition) we performed; every lark we were punished for—every meal we ate. But space forbids this self-indulgence, and other considerations make it unadvisable—so I will resist the temptation.

La Pension Brossard! How often have we both talked of it, Barty and I, as middle-aged men; in the billiard-room of the Marathoneum, let us say, sitting together on a comfortable couch, with tea and cigarettes—and always in French whispers! we could only talk of Brossard's in French.

"Te rappelles-tu l'habit neuf de Berquin, et son chapeau haute-forme?"

"Te souviens-tu de la vieille chatte angora du père Jaurion?" &c., &c., &c.

Idiotic reminiscences! as charming to revive as any old song with words of little meaning that meant so much when one was four—five—six years old! before one knew even how to spell them!

"Paille à Dine—paille à Chine—
Paille à Suzette et Martine—
Bon lit à la Dumaine!"

Céline, my nurse, used to sing this—and I never knew what it meant; nor do I now! But it was charming indeed.

Even now I dream that I go back to school, to get coached by Dumollard in a little more algebra. I wander about the playground; but all the boys are new, and don't even know my name; and silent, sad, and ugly, every one! Again Dumollard persecutes me. And in the middle of it I reflect that, after all, he is a person of no importance whatever, and that I am a member of the British Parlia-



"IF HE ONLY KNEW!"

ment—a baronet—a millionaire—and one of her Majesty's Privy Councillors! and that M. Dumollard must be singularly "out of it," even for a Frenchman, not to be aware of this.

"If he only knew!" says I to myself, says I—in my dream.

Besides, can't the man see with his own eyes that I'm grown up, and big enough to tuck him under my left arm, and spank him just as if he were a little naughty boy—confound the brute!

Then, suddenly:

"Maurice, au piquet pour une heure!"

"Moi, m'sieur?"

"Oui, vous!"

"Pourquoi, m'sieur!"

"Parce que ça me plaît!"

And I wake—and could almost weep to find how old I am!

And Barty Josselin is no more—oh! my God!... and his dear wife survived him just twenty-four hours!

Behold us both "en Philosophie!"

And Barty the head-boy of the school, though not the oldest—and the brilliant show-boy of the class.

Just before Easter (1851) he and I and Rapaud and Laferté and Jolivet trois (who was nineteen) and Palaiseau and Bussy-Rabutin went up for our "bachot" at the Sorbonne.

We sat in a kind of big musty school-room with about thirty other boys from other schools and colleges. There we sat side by side from ten till twelve at long desks, and had a long piece of Latin dictated to us, with the punctuation in French: "un point—point et virgule—deux points—point d'exclamation—guillemets—ouvrez la parenthèse," &c., &c.—monotonous details that enervate one at such a moment!

Then we set to work with our dictionaries and wrote out a translation according to our lights—a *pion* walking about and watching us narrowly for cribs, in case we should happen to have one for this particular extract, which was most unlikely.

Barty's nose bled, I remember—and this made him nervous.

Then we went and lunched at the Café de l'Odeon, on the best omelet we had ever tasted.

"Te rappelles-tu cette omelette?" said poor Barty to me only last Christmas as ever was!

Then we went back with our hearts in our mouths to find if we had qualified ourselves by our "version écrite" for the oral examination that comes after, and which is so easy to pass—the examiners having lunched themselves into good-nature.

There we stood panting, some fifty boys and masters, in a small, whitewashed room like a prison. An official comes in and puts the list of candidates in a frame on the wall, and we crane our necks over each other's shoulders.

And, lo! Barty is plucked—*collé*! and I have passed, and actually Rapaud—and no one else from Brossard's!

An old man—a parent or grandparent probably of some unsuccessful candidate—bursts into tears and exclaims—

"Oh! que malheur—que malheur!"

A shabby, tall, pallid youth, in the uniform of the Collège Ste.-Barbe, rushes down the stone stairs shrieking—

"Ça que l'injustice, ici!"

One hears him all over the place; terrible heartburns and tragic disappointments in the beginning of life resulted from failure in

this first step—a failure which disqualified one for all the little government appointments so dear to the heart of the frugal French parent. "Mille francs par an! c'est le Pactole!"

Barty took his defeat pretty easily—he put it all down to his nose bleeding—and seemed so pleased at my success, and my dear mother's delight in it, that he was soon quite consoled; he was always like that.



"MAURICE, AU PIQUET!"

To M. Mérovée, Barty's failure was as great a disappointment as it was a painful surprise.

"Try again, Josselin! Don't leave here till you have passed. If you are content to fail in this, at the very outset of your career, you will never succeed in anything through life! Stay with us as my guest till you can go up again, and again if necessary. *Do*, my dear child—it will make me so happy! I shall feel it as a proof that you reciprocate in some degree the warm friendship I have always borne you—in common with everybody in the school! Je t'en prie, mon garçon!"

Then he went to the Rohans and tried to persuade them. But Lord Archibald didn't care much about Bachots, nor his wife either.

They were going back to live in England, besides; and Barty was going into the Guards.

I left school also—with a mixture of hope and elation, and yet the most poignant regret.

I can hardly find words to express the gratitude and affection I felt for Mérovée Brossard when I bade him farewell.

Except his father before him, he was the best and finest Frenchman I ever knew. There is nothing invidious in my saying this, and in this way. I merely speak of the Brossard, father and son, as Frenchmen in this connection, because their admirable qualities of heart and mind were so essentially French; they would have done equal honour to any country in the world.

I corresponded with him regularly for a few years, and so did Barty; and then our letters grew fewer and further between, and finally left off altogether—as nearly always happens in such cases, I think. And I never saw him again; for when he broke up the school he went to his own province in the south-east, and lived there till twenty years ago, when he died—unmarried, I believe.

Then there was Monsieur Bonzig, and Mlle. Marceline, and others—and three or four boys with both Barty and I were on terms of warm and intimate friendship. None of these boys that I know of have risen to any world-wide fame; and oddly enough, none of them have ever given sign of life to Barty Josselin, who is just as famous in France for his French literary work as on this side of the Channel for all he has done in English. He towers just as much there as here; and this double eminence now dominates the entire globe, and we are beginning at last to realise everywhere that this bright luminary in our firmament is no planet, like Mars or Jupiter, but, like Sirius, a sun.

Yet never a line from an old comrade in that school where he lived for four years and was so strangely popular—and which he so filled with his extraordinary personality!

So much for Barty Josselin's school life and mine. I fear I may have dwelt on them at too great a length. No period of time has ever been for me so bright and happy as those seven years I spent at the Institution F. Brossard—especially the four years I spent there with Barty Josselin. The older I get, the more I love to recall the trivial little incidents that made for us both the sum of existence in those happy days.

La chasse aux souvenirs d'enfance! what better sport can there be, or more bloodless, at my time of life?

And all the lonely pathetic pains and pleasures of it, now that *he* is gone!

The winter twilight has just set in—"betwixt dog and wolf." I wander alone (but for Barty's old mastiff, who follows me willy-nilly) in the woods and lanes that surround Marsfield on the Thames, the picturesque abode of the Josselins.

Darker and darker it grows. I no longer make out the familiar trees and hedges, and forget how cold it is and how dreary.

"Je marcherai les yeux fixés sur mes pensées,
Sans rien voir au dehors, sans entendre aucun bruit—
Seul, inconnu, le dos courbé, les mains croisées:
Triste—et le jour pour moi sera comme la nuit."

(This is Victor Hugo, not Barty Josselin.)

It's really far away I am—across the sea; across the years, O Posthumus! in a sunny playground that has been built over long ago, or overgrown with lawns and flower-beds and costly shrubs.

Up rises some vague little rudiment of a hint of a ghost of a sunny, funny old French remembrance long forgotten—a brand-new old remembrance—a kind of will-o'-the-wisp. Chut! my soul stalks it on tiptoe, while these earthly legs bear this poor old body of clay, by mere reflex action, straight home to the beautiful Elizabethan house on the hill; through the great warm hall, up the broad oak stairs, into the big cheerful music-room like a studio—ruddy and bright with the huge log-fire opposite the large window. All is on an ample scale at Marsfield, people and things! and I! sixteen stone, good Lord!

How often that window has been my beacon on dark nights! I used to watch for it from the train—a landmark in a land of milk and honey—the kindest light that ever led me yet on earth.

I sit me down in my own particular chimney-corner, in my own cane-bottomed chair by the fender, and stare at the blaze with my friend the mastiff. An old warbattered tomcat Barty was fond of jumps up and makes friends too. There goes my funny little French remembrance, trying to fly up the chimney like a burnt love-letter....

Barty's eldest daughter (Roberta), a stately, tall Hebe in black, brings me a very sizable cup of tea, just as I like it. A well-grown little son of hers, a very Ganymede, beau comme le jour, brings me a cigarette, and insists on lighting it for me himself. I like that too.

Another daughter of Barty's, "la rossignolle," as we call her—though there is no such word that I know of—goes to the piano and sings little French songs of forty, fifty years ago—songs that she has learnt from her dear papa.

Heavens! what a voice! and how like his, but for the difference of sex, and her long and careful training (which he never had); and the accent, how perfect!

Then suddenly—

"À Saint-Blaise, à la Zuecca . . .
Vous étiez, vous étiez bien aise!
À Saint-Blaise, à la Zuecca . . .
Nous étions, nous étions bien là!
Mais de vous en souvenir
Prendrez-vous la peine?
Mais de vous en souvenir,
Et d'y revenir?
À Saint-Blaise, à la Zuecca . . .
Vivre et mourir là!"

So sings Mrs. Trevor (Mary Josselin that was) in the richest, sweetest voice I know. And behold! at last I have caught my little French remembrance, just as the lamps are being lit—and I transfix it with my pen and write it down. . . .



"QUAND ON PERD, PAR TRISTE OCCURRENCE,
SON ESPÉRANCE,
ET SA GAÎTÉ,
LE REMÈDE AU MÉLANCOLIQUE
C'EST LA MUSIQUE
ET LA BEAUTÉ"

And then with a sigh I scratch it all out again, sunny and funny as it is. For it's all about a comical adventure I had with Palaiseau, the sniffer at the fête de St.-Cloud—all about a tame magpie, a gendarme, a blanchisseuse, and a volume of De Musset's poems, and doesn't concern Barty in the least; for it so happened that Barty wasn't there.

Thus, in the summer of 1851, Barty Josselin and I bade adieu for ever to our happy school life—and for a few years to our beloved Paris—and for many years to our close intimacy of every hour in the day.

I remember spending two or three afternoons with him at the great Exhibition in Hyde Park just before he went on a visit to his grandfather, Lord Whitby, in Yorkshire—and happy afternoons they were! and we made the most of them. We saw all there was to be seen there, I think; and found ourselves always drifting back to the "Amazon" and the "Greek Slave," for both of which Barty's admiration was boundless.

And so was mine. They made the female fashions for 1851 quite deplorable by contrast—especially the shoes, and the way of dressing the hair; we almost came to the conclusion that female beauty when un-adorned is adorned the most. It awes and chastens one so! and wakes up the knight-errant inside! even the smartest French boots can't do this! not the pinkest silken hose in all Paris! not all the frills and underfrills and wonderfrills that M. Paul Bourget can so eloquently describe!

My father had taken a house for us in Brunswick Square, next to the Foundling Hospital. He was about to start an English branch of the Vougeot-Conti firm in the City. I will not trouble the reader with any details about this enterprise, which presented many difficulties at first, and indeed rather crippled our means.

My mother was anxious that I should go to one of the universities, Oxford or Cambridge; but this my father could not afford. She had a great dislike to business—and so had I; from different motives, I fancy. I had the wish to become a man of science—a passion that had been fired by M. Dumollard, whose special chemistry class at the Pension Brossard, with its attractive experiments, had been of the deepest interest to me. I have not described it because Barty did not come in.

Fortunately for my desire, my good father had a great sympathy with me in this; so I was entered as a student at the Laboratory of Chemistry at University College, close by—in October 1851—and studied there for two years, instead of going at once into my father's business in Barge Yard, Bucklersbury, which would have pleased him even more.

At about the same time Barty was presented with a commission in the Second Battalion of the Grenadier Guards, and joined immediately.

Nothing could have been more widely apart than the lives we led, or the society we severally frequented.

I lived at home with my people; he in rooms on a second floor in St. James's Street; he had a semi-grand piano, and luxurious furniture, and bookcases already well filled, and nicely-coloured lithograph engravings on the walls—beautiful female faces—the gift of Lady Archibald, who had superintended Barty's installation with kindly maternal interest, but little appreciation of high art. There were also foils, boxing-gloves, dumb-bells, and Indian clubs; and many weapons, ancient and modern, belonging more especially to his own martial profession. They were most enviable quarters. But he often came to see us in Brunswick Square, and dined with us once or twice a week, and was made much of—even by my father, who thoroughly disapproved of everything about him except his own genial and agreeable self, which hadn't altered in the least.

My father was much away—in Paris and Dijon—and Barty made rain and fine weather in our dull abode, to use a French expression—*il y faisait la pluie et le beau temps*. That is, it rained there when he was away, and he brought the fine weather with him; and we spoke French all round.

The greatest pleasure I could have was to breakfast with Barty in St. James's Street on Sunday mornings, when he was not serving his Queen and country—either alone with him or with two or three of his friends—mostly young carpet warriors like himself; and very charming fellows they were. I have always been fond of warriors, young or old, and of whatever rank, and wish to goodness I had been a warrior myself. I feel sure I should have made a fairly good one!

Then we would spend an hour or two in athletic exercises and smoke many pipes. And after this, in the summer, we would walk in Kensington Gardens and see the Rank and Fashion. In those days the Rank and Fashion were not above showing themselves in the Kensington Gardens of a Sunday afternoon, crossing the Serpentine Bridge again and again between Prince's Gate and Bayswater.

Then for dinner we went to some pleasant foreign pot-house in or near Leicester Square, where they spoke French—and ate and drank it!—and then back again to his rooms. Sometimes we would be alone, which I liked best: we would read and smoke and be happy; or he would sketch, or pick out accompaniments on his guitar; often not exchanging a word, but with a delightful sense of close companionship which silence almost intensified.

Sometimes we were in jolly company: more warriors; young Robson, the actor who became so famous; a big negro pugilist, called Snowdrop; two medical students from St. Georges' Hospital, who boxed well and were capital fellows; and an academy art student, who died a Royal Academician, and who did not approve of Barty's mural decorations and laughed at the coloured lithographs; and many others of all sorts. There used to be much turf talk, and some-

times a little card-playing and mild gambling—but Barty's tastes did not lie that way.

His idea of a pleasant evening was putting on the gloves with Snowdrop, or any one else who chose—or fencing—or else making music; or being funny in any way one could; and for this he had quite a special gift: he had sudden droll inspirations that made one absolutely hysterical—mere things of suggestive look or sound or gesture, reminding one of Robson himself, but quite original; absolute senseless rot and drivel, but still it made one laugh till one's sides ached. And he never failed of success in achieving this.

Among the dullest and gravest of us, and even some of the most high-minded, there is often a latent longing for this kind of happy idiotic fooling, and a grateful fondness for those who can supply it without effort and who delight in doing so. Barty was the precursor of the Arthur Robertses and Fred Leslies and Dan Lenos of our day, although he developed in quite another direction!

Then of a sudden he would sing some little twopenny love-ballad or sentimental nigger melody so touchingly that one had the lump in the throat; poor Snowdrop would weep by the spoonfuls!

By-the-way, it suddenly occurs to me that I'm mixing things up—confusing Sundays and weekdays; of course our Sunday evenings were quiet and respectable, and I much preferred them when he and I were alone; he was then another young person altogether—a thoughtful and intelligent young Frenchman, who loved reading poetry aloud or being read to; especially English poetry—Byron! He was faithful to his "Don Juan," his Hebrew melodies—his "O'er the glad waters of the deep blue sea." We knew them all by heart, or nearly so, and yet we read them still: and Victor Hugo and Lamartine, and dear Alfred de Musset. . . .

And one day I discovered another Alfred who wrote verses—Alfred the Great, as we called him—one Alfred Tennyson, who had written a certain poem, among others, called "In Memoriam"—which I carried off to Barty's and read aloud one wet Sunday evening, and the Sunday evening after, and other Sunday evenings; and other poems by the same hand: "Locksley Hall," "Ulysses," "The Lotos-Eaters," "The Lady of Shalott"—and the chord of Byron passed in music out of sight.

Then Shelley dawned upon us, and John Keats, and Wordsworth—and our Sunday evenings were of a happiness to be remembered for ever; at least they were so to me!

If Barty Josselin were on duty on the Sabbath, it was a blank day for Robert Maurice. For it was not very lively at home—especially when my father was there. He was the best and kindest man that ever lived, but his businesslike seriousness about this world, and his anxiety about the next, and his Scotch Sabbatarianism, were deadly depressing; combined with the aspect of London on the Lord's day—London east of Russell Square! Oh, Paris . . .

Paris . . . and the yellow omnibus that took us both there together, Barty and me, at eight on a Sunday morning in May or June, and didn't bring us back to school till fourteen hours later!

I shall never forget one gloomy wintry Sunday—somewhere in 1854 or '5, if I'm not mistaken, towards the end of Barty's career as a Guardsman.

Twice after lunch I had called at Barty's, who was to have been on duty in barracks or at the Tower that morning; he had not come back; I called for him at his club, but he hadn't been there either—and I turned my face eastward and homeward with a sickening sense of desolate ennui and deep disgust of London, for which I could find no terms that are fit for publication!

And this was not lessened by the bitter reproaches I made myself for being such a selfish and unworthy son and brother. It was precious dull at home for my mother and sister—and my place was *there*.

They were just lighting the lamps as I got to the arcade in the Quadrant—and there I ran against the cheerful Barty. Joy! and what a change in the aspect of everything! It rained light! He pulled a new book out of his pocket, which he had just borrowed from some fair lady—and showed it to me. It was called *Maud*.

We dined at Pergolese's, in Rupert Street—and went back to Barty's—and read the lovely poem out loud, taking it by turns; and that is the most delightful recollection I have since I left the Institution F. Brossard!

Occasionally I dined with him "on guard" at St. James's Palace—and well I could understand all the attractions of his life, so different from mine, and see what a good fellow he was to come so often to Brunswick Square, and seem so happy with us.

The reader will conclude that I was a kind of over-affectionate, pestering, dull dog, who made this brilliant youth's life a burden to him. It was really not so; we had very many tastes in common; and with all his various temptations, he had a singularly constant and affectionate nature—and was of a Frenchness that made French thought and talk and commune almost a daily necessity. We nearly always spoke French when together alone, or with my mother and sister. It would have seemed almost unnatural not to have done so.

I always feel a special tenderness towards young people whose lives have been such that those two languages are exactly the same to them. It means so many things to me. It doubles them in my estimation, and I seem to understand them through and through.

Nor did he seem to care much for the smart society of which he saw so much; perhaps the bar sinister may have made him feel less at his ease in general society than among his intimates and old friends. I feel sure he took this to heart more than anyone would have thought possible from his careless manner.

He only once alluded directly to this when we were together. I was speaking to him of the enviable brilliancy of his lot. He looked at me pensively for a minute or two, and said, in English—

"You've got a kink in your nose, Bob—if it weren't for that you'd be a deuced good-looking fellow—like me; but you ain't."

"Thanks—anything else?" said I.

"Well, I've got a kink in my birth, you see—and that's as big a kill-joy as I know. I hate it!"

It was hard luck. He would have made such a splendid Marquis of Whitby! and done such honour to the proud family motto—

"Roy ne puis, prince ne daigne, Rohan je suis!"

Instead of which he got himself a signet-ring, and on it he caused to be engraved a zero within a naught, and round them—

"Rohan ne puis, roi ne daigne. Rien ne suis!"

Soon it became pretty evident that a subtle change was being wrought in him.

He had quite lost his power of feeling the north, and missed it dreadfully; he could no longer turn his back-somersault with ease and safety; he had overcome his loathing for meat, and also his dislike for sport—he had, indeed, become a very good shot.

But he could still hear and see and smell with all the keenness of a young animal or a savage. And that must have made his sense of being alive very much more vivid than is the case with other mortals.

He had also corrected his quick impulsive tendency to slap faces that were an inch or two higher up than his own. He didn't often come across one, for one thing—then it would not have been considered "good form" in her Majesty's Household Brigade.

When he was a boy, as the reader may recollect, he was fond of drawing lovely female profiles with black hair and an immense black eye, and gazing at them as he smoked a cigarette and listened to pretty, light music. He developed a most ardent admiration for female beauty, and mixed more and more in worldly and fashionable circles (of which I saw nothing whatever); circles where the heavenly gift of beauty is made more of, perhaps, than is quite good for its possessors, whether female or male.

He was himself of a personal beauty so exceptional that incredible temptations came his way. Aristocratic people all over the world make great allowances for beauty-born frailties that would spell ruin and everlasting disgrace for women of the class to which it is my privilege to belong.

Barty, of course, did not confide his love adventures to me; in this he was no Frenchman. But I saw quite enough to know he was more pursued than pursuing; and what a pursuer, to a man built like that! no innocent, impulsive young girl, no simple maiden in her flower—no Elaine.

But a magnificent full-blown peeress, who knew her own mind and had nothing to fear, for her husband was no better than herself. But for that a Guinevere and Vivien rolled into one, *plus* Messalina!

Nor was she the only light o' love; there are many naughty "grandes dames de par le monde" whose easy virtue fits them like a silk stocking, and who live and love pretty much as they please

without loss of caste, so long as they keep clear of any open scandal. It is one of the privileges of high rank.

Then there were the ladies gay, frankly of the half-world, these—laughter-loving *hetæræ*, with perilously soft hearts for such as Barty Josselin! There was even poor, listless, lazy, languid Jenny, "Fond of a kiss and fond of a guinea!"

His heart was never touched—of that I feel sure; and he was not vain of these triumphs; but he was a very reckless youth, a kind of young John Churchill before Sarah Jennings took him in hand—absolutely non-moral about such things, rather than immoral.

He grew to be a quite notorious young man about town; and, most unfortunately for him, Lord (and even Lady) Archibald Rohan were so fond of him, and so proud, and so amiably non-moral themselves, that he was left to go as he might.

He also developed some very rowdy tastes indeed—and so did I!

It was the fashion of our golden youth in the fifties to do so. Every night in the Haymarket there was a kind of noisy saturnalia, in which golden youths joined hands with youths who were by no means golden, to give much trouble to the police, and fill the pockets of the keepers of night-houses—"Bob Croft's," "Kate Hamilton's," the "Piccadilly Saloon," and other haunts equally well pulled down and forgotten. It was good, in these regions, to be young and big and strong like Barty and me, and well versed in the "handling of one's daddles." I suppose London was the only great city in the world where such things could be. I am afraid that many strange people of both sexes called us Bob and Barty; people the mere sight or hearing of whom would have given my poor dear father fits!

Then there was a little public-house in St. Martin's Lane, kept by big Ben the prize-fighter. In a room at the top of the house there used to be much sparring. We both of us took a high degree in the noble art—especially I, if it be not bragging to say so; mostly on account of my weight, which was considerable for my age. It was in fencing that he beat me hollow: he was quite the best fencer I have ever met; the lessons at school of Bonnet's *prévôt* had borne good fruit in his case.

Then there were squalid dens frequented by touts and betting-men and medical students, where people sang and fought and laid the odds and got very drunk—and where Barty's performances as a vocalist, comic and sentimental (especially the latter), raised enthusiasm that seems almost incredible among such a brutalised and hardened crew.

One night he and I, and a medical student called Ticklefs, who had a fine bass voice, disguised ourselves as paupers, and went singing for money about Camden Town and Morningson Crescent and Regent's Park. It took us about an hour to make eighteen pence. Barty played the guitar, Ticklefs the tambourine, and I the bones. Then we went to the Haymarket, and Barty made five pounds in no

time; most of it in silver donations from unfortunate women—English, of course—who are among the softest-hearted and most generous creatures in the world.

“O lachrymarum fons!”

I forget what use we made of the money—a good one, I feel sure. I am sorry to reveal all this, but Barty wished it. Forty years ago such things did not seem so horrible as they would now, and the word “bounder” had not been invented.

My sister Ida, when about fourteen (1853), became a pupil at the junior school in the Ladies’ College, 48 Bedford Square. She soon made friends—nice young girls, who came to our house, and it was much the livelier. I used to hear much of them, and knew them well before I ever saw them—especially Leah Gibson, who lived in Tavistock Square, and was Ida’s special friend; at last I was quite anxious to see this paragon.

One morning, as I carried Ida’s books on her way to school, she pointed out to me three girls of her own age, or less, who stood talking together at the gates of the Foundling Hospital. They were all three very pretty children—quite singularly so—and became great beauties; one golden-haired, one chestnut-brown, one blue-black. The black-haired one was the youngest and the tallest—a fine, straight, bony child of twelve, with a flat back and square shoulders; she was very well dressed, and had nice brown boots with elastic sides on arched and straight-heeled slender feet, and white stockings on her long legs—a fashion in hose that has long gone out. She also wore a thick plait of black hair all down her back—another departed mode, and one not to be regretted, I think; and she swung her books round her as she talked, with easy movements, like a strong boy.

“That’s Leah Gibson,” says my sister; “the tall one, with the long black plait.”

Leah Gibson turned round and nodded to my sister and smiled—showing a delicate narrow face, a clear pale complexion, very beautiful white pearly teeth between very red lips, and an extraordinary pair of large black eyes—rather close together—the blackest I ever saw, but with an expression so quick and penetrating and keen, and yet so good and frank and friendly, that they positively sent a little warm thrill through me—though she was only twelve years old, and not a bit older than her age, and I a fast youth nearly twenty!

And finding her very much to my taste, I said to my sister, just for fun, “Oh—that’s Leah Gibson is it? then some day Leah Gibson shall be Mrs. Robert Maurice!”

From which it may be inferred that I looked on Leah Gibson, at the first sight of her, as likely to become some day an extremely desirable person.

She did.

The Gibsons lived in a very good house in Tavistock Square. They seemed very well off. Mrs. Gibson had a nice carriage, which she kept entirely on her own money. Her father who was dead, had been a wealthy solicitor. He had left a large family, and to each of of them property worth £300 a year, and a very liberal allowance of good looks.

Mr. Gibson was in business in the City.

Leah, their only child, was the darling of their hearts and the apple of their eyes. To dress her beautifully, to give her all the best masters



THREE LITTLE MAIDS FROM SCHOOL (1853)

money could produce, and treat her to every amusement in London — theatres, the opera, all the concerts and shows there were, and give endless young parties for her pleasure—all this seemed the principal interest of their lives.

Soon after my first introduction to Leah, Ida and I received an invitation to a kind of juvenile festivity at the Gibson's, and went, and spent a delightful evening. We were received by Mrs. Gibson most cordially. She was such an extremely pretty person, and so charmingly dressed, and had such winning, natural, genial manners,

that I fell in love with her at first sight; she was also very playful and fond of romping; for she was young still, having married at seventeen.

Her mother, Mrs. Bletchley (who was present), was a Spanish Jewess—a most magnificent and beautiful old person in splendid attire, tall and straight, with white hair and thick black eyebrows, and large eyes as black as night.

In Leah the high Sephardic Jewish type was more marked than in Mrs. Gibson (who was not Jewish at all in aspect, and took after her father, the late Mr. Bletchley).

It is a type that sometimes, just now and again, can be so pathetically noble and beautiful in a woman, so suggestive of chastity and the most passionate love combined—love conjugal and filial and maternal—love that implies all the big practical obligations and responsibilities of human life, that the mere term “Jewess” (and especially its French equivalent) brings to my mind some vague, mysterious, exotically poetic image of all I love best in a woman. I find myself dreaming of Rebecca of York, as I used to dream of her in the English class at Brossard’s where I so pitied poor Ivanhoe for his misplaced constancy.

If Rebecca at fifty-five was at all like Mrs. Bletchley, poor old Sir Wilfred’s regrets must have been all that Thackeray made them out to be in his immortal story of *Rebecca and Rowena*.

Mr. Gibson was a good-looking man, some twelve or fifteen years older than his wife; his real vocation was to be a low comedian; this showed itself on my first introduction to him. He informally winked at me and said—

“Esker-voos ker jer dwaw lah vee? Ah! kel bonnure!”

This idiotic speech (all the French he knew) was delivered in so droll and natural a manner that I took to him at once. Barty himself couldn’t have been funnier!

Well, we had games of forfeits and danced, and Ida played charming things by Mendelssohn on the piano, and Leah sang very nicely in a fine, bold, frank, deep voice, like a choir boy’s, and Mrs. Gibson danced a Spanish fandango, and displayed feet and ankles of which she was very proud, and had every right to be; and then Mr. Gibson played a solo on the flute, and sang “My Pretty Jane”—both badly enough to be very funny without any conscious effort or straining on his part. Then we supped, and the food was good, and we were all very jolly indeed; and after supper Mr. Gibson said to me—

“Now, Mister Parleyvoo—can’t *you* do something to amuse the company? You’re big enough!”

I professed my willingness to do *anything*—and wished I was Barty more than ever!

“Well, then,” says he—“kneel to the wittiest, bow to the prettiest—and kiss the one you love best.”

This was rather a large order—but I did as well as I could. I went down on my knees to Mr. Gibson and craved his paternal blessing; and made my best French bow with my heels together to old

Mrs. Bletchley; and kissed my sister, warmly thanking her in public for having introduced me to Mrs. Gibson: and as far as mere social success is worth anything, I was the Barty of that party!

Anyhow, Mr. Gibson conceived for me an admiration he never failed to express when we met afterwards, and though this was fun, of course, I had really won his heart.

It is but a humble sort of triumph to crow over—and where does Josselin come in?

Pazienza!

"Well—what do you think of Leah Gibson?" said my sister, as we walked home together through Torrington Square.

"I think she's a regular stunner," said I—"like her mother and her grandmother before her, and probably her *great*-grandmother too."

And being a poetical youth, and well up in my Byron, I declaimed—

"She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes." . . .

Old fogey as I am, and still given to poetical quotations, I never made a more felicitous quotation than that. I little guessed then what splendour that bony black-eyed damsel would reach in time.

All through this period of high life and low dissipation Barty kept his unalterable good-humour and high spirits—and especially the kindly grace of manner and tact and good-breeding that kept him from ever offending the most fastidious, in spite of his high spirits, and made him many a poor grateful outcast's friend and darling.

I remember once dining with him at Greenwich in very distinguished company; I don't remember how I came to be invited—through Barty, no doubt. He got me many invitations that I often thought it better not to accept. "Ne sutor ultra crepidam!"

It was a fish dinner, and Barty ate and drank a surprising amount—and so did I, and liked it very much.

We were all late and hurried for the last train, some twenty of us—and Barty, Lord Archibald, and I, and a Colonel Walker Lindsay, who has since become a peer and a Field-Marshal (and is now dead), were all pushed together into a carriage, already containing a distinguished clergyman and a charming young lady—probably his daughter; from his dress, he was either a dean or a bishop, and I sat opposite to him—in the corner.

Barty was very noisy and excited as the train moved off; he was rather tipsy, in fact—and I was alarmed, on account of the clerical gentleman and his female companion. As we journeyed on, Barty began to romp and play the fool and perform fantastic tricks—to the immense delight of the future Field-Marshal. He twisted two pocket-handkerchiefs into human figures, one on each hand, and

made them sing to each other—like Grisi and Mario in the *Huguenots*—and clever drivel of that kind. Lord Archibald and Colonel Lindsay were beside themselves with glee at all this; they also had dined well.

Then he imitated a poor man fishing in St. James's Park and not catching any fish. And this really was uncommonly good and true to life—with wonderful artistic details, that showed keen observation.

I saw that the bishop and his daughter (if such they were) grew deeply interested, and laughed and chuckled discreetly; the young lady had a charming expression on her face as she watched the idiotic Barty, who got more idiotic with every smile—and this was to be the man who wrote *Sardonix*!

As the train slowed into the London station, the bishop leant forward towards me and inquired, in a whisper—

"May I ask the name of your singularly delightful young friend?"

"His name is Barty Josselin," I answered.

"Not of the Grenadier Guards?"

"Yes."

"Oh, indeed! a—yes—I've heard of him——"

And his lordship's face became hard and stern—and soon we all got out.

PART FOURTH

"La cigale ayant chanté
Tout l'été,
Se trouva fort dépourvue
Quand la bise fut venue."
—LAFONTAINE.

SOMETIMES I went to see Lord and Lady Archibald, who lived in Clarges Street; and Lady Archibald was kind enough to call on my mother, who was charmed with her, and returned her call in due time.

Also, at about this period (1853) my uncle Charles (Captain Blake, late 17th Lancers), who had been Lord Runswick's crony twenty years before, patched up some feud he had with my father, and came to see us in Brunswick Square.

He had just married a charming girl, young enough to be his daughter.

I took him to see Barty, and they became fast friends. My uncle Charles was a very accomplished man, and spoke French as well as any of us; and Barty liked him, and it ended oddly enough, in Uncle Charles becoming Lord Whitby's land-agent and living in St. Hilda's Terrace, Whitby.

He was a very good fellow and a thorough man of the world, and was of great service to Barty in many ways. But, alas and alas! he was not able to prevent or make up the disastrous quarrel that happened between Barty and Lord Archibald, with such terrible results to my friend—to both.

It is all difficult even to hint at—but some of it must be more than hinted at.

Lord Archibald, like his nephew, was a very passionate admirer of lovely women. He had been for many years a faithful and devoted husband to the excellent French woman who had brought him wealth—and such affection! Then a terrible temptation came in his way. He fell in love with a very beautiful and fascinating lady, whose birth and principles and antecedents were alike very unfortunate, and Barty was mixed up in all this: it's the saddest thing I ever heard.

The beautiful lady conceived for Barty one of those frantic passions that must lead to somebody's ruin—it led to his; but he was never to blame, except for the careless indiscretion which allowed of his being concerned in the miserable business at all, and to this frantic passion he did not respond.

"Spretæ injuria formæ."

So at least she fancied: it was not so. Barty was no laggard in love; but he dearly loved his uncle Archie, and was loyal to him all through.

"His honour rooted in dishonour stood,
And faith unfaithful kept him falsely true."

Where he was unfaithful was to his beloved and adoring Lady Archibald—his second mother—at miserable cost of undying remorse to himself for ever having sunk to become Lord Archibald's confidant and love-messenger, and bearer of nosegays and *billets doux*, and singer of little French songs. He was only twenty, and thought of such things as jokes; he had lived among some of the pleasantest, best-bred, and most corrupt people in London.

The beautiful frail lady told the most infamous lies, and stuck to them through thick and thin. The story is not new; it's as old as the Pharaohs. And Barty and his uncle quarrelled beyond recall. The boy was too proud even to defend himself, beyond one simple denial.

Then another thing happened. Lady Archibald died, quite suddenly, of peritonitis—fortunately in ignorance of what was happening, and with her husband and daughter and Barty round her bedside at the end. She died deceived and happy.

Lord Archibald was beside himself with grief; but in six months he married the beautiful lady, and went to the bad altogether—went under, in fact; and Daphne, his daughter of fourteen or fifteen, was taken by the Whitbys.

So now Barty, thoroughly sick of smart society, found himself in an unexpected position—without an allowance, in a crack regiment, and never a penny to look forward to!

For old Lord Whitby, who loved him, was a poor man with a large family; and every penny of Lady Archibald's fortune that didn't go to her husband and daughter went back to her own family of Lonlay-Savignac. She had made no will—no provision for her beloved, her adopted son!

So Barty never went to the Crimea, after all, but sold out, and found himself the possessor of seven or eight hundred pounds—most of which he owed—and with the world before him; but I am going too fast.

In the winter of 1853, just before Christmas, my father fitted up for me a chemical laboratory at the top of the fine old house in Barge Yard, Bucklersbury, where his wine business was carried on, a splendid mansion, with panelled rooms and a carved-oak staircase—once the abode of some Dick Whittington, no doubt a Lord Mayor of London; and I began my professional career, which consisted in analysing anything I could get to analyse for hire, from a sample of gold or copper ore to a poisoned stomach.

Lord Whitby very kindly sent me different samples of soil from different fields on his estate, and I analysed them carefully and found them singularly like each other. I don't think the estate benefited much by my scientific investigation. It was my first job, and brought me twenty pounds (out of which I bought two beautiful fans—one for my sister, the other for Leah Gibson—and got a new evening suit for myself at Barty's tailor's).

When this job of mine was finished I had a good deal of time on my hands, and read many novels and smoked many pipes, as I sat by my chemical stove and distilled water, and dried chlorate of potash to keep the damp out of my scales, and toasted cheese, and fried sausages, and mulled Burgundy, and brewed nice drinks, hot or cold, a speciality of mine.

I also made my laboratory a very pleasant place. My father wouldn't permit a piano, nor could I afford one; but I smuggled in a guitar (for Barty), and also a concertina, which I could play a little myself.



SOLITUDE

Barty often came with friends of his, of whom my father did not approve—mostly Guardsmen; also friends of my own—medical students, and one or two fellow-chemists, who were serious, and pleased my father. We often had a capital time; chemical experiments and explosions, and fearful stinks, and poisoned waters of enchanting hue; also lobsters, oysters, dressed crab for lunch—and my Burgundy was good, I promise you, whether white or red!

We also had songs and music of every description. Barty's taste had improved. He could sing Beethoven's "Adelaida" in English, German, and Italian and Schubert's "Serenade" in French—quite charmingly, to his own ingenious accompaniment on the guitar.

We had another vocalist, a little Hebrew art-student, with a heavenly tenor (I've forgotten his name); and Ticklets, the bass; and a Guardsman, who could yodel and imitate a woman's voice—one Pepys, whom Barty loved because he was a giant, and, according to Barty, "the handsomest chap in London."

These debauches generally happened when my father was abroad—always, in fact. I'm greatly ashamed of it all now; even then my heart smote me heavily at times when I thought of the pride and pleasure he took in all my scientific appliances, and the money they cost him—twenty guineas for a pair of scales! Poor dear old man! he loved to weigh things in them—a feather, a minute crumb of cork, an infinitesimal wisp of cotton wool! . . .

However I've made it all up to him since in many ways; and he has told me that I have been a good son, after all! And that is good to think of now that I am older than he was when he died!

One fine morning, before going to business, I escorted my sister to Bedford Square, calling for Leah Gibson on the way as we walked up Great Russell Street (that being the longest way; round I could think of), we met Barty, looking as fresh as a school-boy, and resplendent as usual. I remember he had on a long blue frock-coat, check trousers, an elaborate waistcoat and scarf, and white hat—as was the fashion—and that he looked singularly out of place (and uncommonly agreeable to the eye) in such an austere and learned neighbourhood.

He was coming to call for me in Brunswick Square.

My sister introduced him to her friend, and he looked down at Leah with a surprised glance of delicate fatherly admiration—he might have been fifty.

Then we left the young ladies and went off together citywards: my father was abroad.

"By Jove, what a stunner that girl is! I'm blest if I don't marry her some day—you see if I don't!"

"That's just what I mean to do," said I. And we had a good laugh at the idea of two such desperadoes, as we thought ourselves, talking like this about a little school-girl.

"We'll toss up," says Barty; and we did, and he won.

This, I remember, was before his quarrel with Lord Archibald. She was then about fourteen, and her subtle and singular beauty was just beginning to make itself felt.

I never knew till long after how deep had been the impression produced by this glimpse of a mere child on a fast young man about town—or I should not have been amused. For there were times when I myself thought quite seriously of Leah Gibson, and what she might be in the long future! She looked a year or two older than she really was, being very tall and extremely sedate.

Also, both my father and mother had conceived such a liking for her that they constantly talked of the possibility of our falling in love with each other some day. Castles in Spain!

As for me, my admiration for the child was immense, and my respect for her character unbounded; and I felt myself such a base unworthy brute that I couldn't bear to think of myself in such a connection—until I had cleansed myself heart and soul (which would take time)! And as for showing by my manner to her that



"PILE OU FACE—HEADS OR TAILS?"

such an idea had ever crossed my mind, the thought never entered my head.

She was just my dear sister's devoted friend; her petticoat hem was still some inches from the ground, and her hair in a plait all down her back. . . .

Girlish innocence and purity incarnate—that is what she seemed; and what she was. "*La plus forte des forces est un cœur innocent,*"

said Victor Hugo—and if you translate this literally into English, it comes to exactly the same, both in rhythm and sense.

When Barty sold out, he first thought he would like to go on the stage, but it turned out that he was too tall to play anything but serious footmen.

Then he thought he would be a singer. We used to go to the opera at Drury Lane, where they gave in English a different Italian opera every night;—and this was always followed by *Acis and Galatea*.

We got our seats in the stalls every evening for a couple of weeks, through the kindness of Mr. Hamilton Braham, whom Barty knew, and who played Polyphemus in Handel's famous serenata.

I remember our first night; they gave *Masaniello*, which I had never seen; and when the tenor sang, "Behold how brightly breaks the morning," it came on us both as a delicious surprise—it was such a favourite song at Brossard's—"amis! la matinée est belle . . ." Indeed, it was one of the songs Barty sang on the boulevard for the poor woman, six or seven years back.

The tenor, Mr. Elliot Galer, had a lovely voice; and that was a moment never to be forgotten.

Then came *Acis and Galatea*, which was so odd and old-fashioned we could hardly sit it out.

Next night, *Lucia*—charming; then again *Acis and Galatea*, because we had nowhere else to go.

"Tiens, tiens!" says Barty, as the lovers sang "The flocks shall leave the mountains;" c'est diantrement joli, ça!—écoute!"

Next night, *La Somnambula*—then again *Acis and Galatea*.

"Mais, nom d'une pipe—elle est divine, cette musique-là!" says Barty.

And the nights after we could scarcely sit out the Italian opera that preceded what we have looked upon ever since as among the divinest music in the world.

So one must not judge music at first hearing; nor poetry; nor pictures at first sight; unless one be poet or painter or musician one's self—not even then! I may live to love thee yet, O *Tannhäuser*!

Lucy Escott, Fanny Huddart, Elliot Galer, and Hamilton Braham—that was the cast; I hear their voices now. . . .

One morning Hamilton Braham tried Barty's voice on the empty stage at St. James's Theatre—made him sing "When other lips."

"Sing out, man—sing out!" said the big bass. And Barty shouted his loudest—a method which did not suit him. I sat in the pit, with half a dozen Guardsmen, who were deeply interested in Barty's operatic aspirations.

It turned out that Barty was neither tenor nor barytone; and that his light voice, so charming in a room, would never do for the operatic stage, although his figure, in spite of his great height, would have suited heroic parts so admirably.

Besides, three or four years training in Italy were needed—a different production altogether.

So Barty gave up this idea and made up his mind to be an artist. He got permission to work in the British Museum, and drew the "Discobolus," and sent his drawing to the Royal Academy, in the hope of being admitted there as a student. He was not.

Then an immense overwhelming homesickness for Paris came over him, and he felt he must go and study art there, and succeed or perish.

My father talked to him like a father, my mother like a mother; we all hung about him and entreated. He was as obdurate as Tennyson's sailor-boy whom the mermaiden forewarned so fiercely!

He was even offered a handsome appointment in the London house of Vougeot-Conti & Co.

But his mind was made up, and to my sorrow, and the sorrow of all who knew him, he fixed the date of his departure for the 2nd of May (1856)—this being the day after a party at the Gibsons'—a young dance in honour of Leah's fifteenth birthday, on the 1st—and to which my sister had procured him an invitation.

He had never been to the Gibsons' before. They belonged to a world so different to anything he had been accustomed to—indeed, to a class that he then so much disliked and despised (both as ex-Guardsman and as the descendant of French toilers of the sea, who hate and scorn the bourgeois)—that I was curious to see how he would bear himself there; and rather nervous, for it would have grieved me that he should look down on people of whom I was getting very fond. It was his theory that all successful business people were pompous and purse-proud and vulgar.

I admit that in the fifties we very often were.

There may perhaps be a few survivals of that period: *old nouveaux riches*, who are still modestly jocose on the subject of each other's millions when they meet, and indulge in pompous little pleasantries about their pet economics, and drop a pompous little *h* now and then, and pretend they only did it for fun. But, dear me, there are other things to be vulgar about in this world besides money and uncertain aspirates.

If to be pompous and pretentious and insincere is to be vulgar, I really think the vulgar of our time are not these old plutocrats—not even their grandsons, who hunt and shoot and yacht and swagger with the best—but those solemn little prigs who have done well at school or college, and become radicals and agnostics before they've even had time to find out what men and women are made of, or what sex they belong to themselves (if any), and loathe all fun and sport and athletics, and rave about pictures and books and music they don't understand, and would pretend to despise if they did—things that were not even *meant* to be understood. It doesn't take three generations to make a prig—worse luck!

At the Gibson's there was neither pompousness nor insincerity nor pretension of any kind, and therefore no real vulgarity. It is true they were a little bit noisy there sometimes, but only in fun.

When we arrived at that most hospitable house, the two prettv

drawing rooms were already crammed with young people, and the dancing was in full swing.

I presented Barty to Mrs. Gibson, who received him with her usual easy cordiality, just as she would have received one of her husband's clerks, or the Prime Minister; or the Prince Consort himself, for that matter. But she looked up into his face with such frank unabashed admiration that I couldn't help laughing—nor could he.

She presented him to Mr. Gibson, who drew himself back and folded his arms and frowned; then suddenly, striking a beautiful stage attitude of surprised emotion, with his hand on his heart, he exclaimed—

"Oh! Monsewer! Esker-voo ker jer dwaw lah vee? Ah! kel bonnure!"

And this so tickled Barty that he forgot his manners and went into peals of laughter. And from that moment I ceased to exist as the bright particular star in Mr. Gibson's firmament of eligible young men: for in spite of the kink in my nose, and my stolid gravity, which was really and merely the result of my shyness, he had always looked upon me as an exceptionally presentable, proper, and goodly youth, and a most exemplary—that is, if my sister was to be trusted in the matter; for she was my informant.

I'm afraid Barty was not so immediately popular with the young cavaliers of the party—but all came right in due time. For after supper, which was early, Barty played the fool with Mr. Gibson, and taught him how to do a mechanical wax figure, of which he himself was the showman; and the laughter, both barytone and soprano, might have been heard in Russell Square. Then they sang an extempore Italian duet together, which was screamingly droll—and so forth.

Leah distinguished herself as usual by being attentive to the material wants of the company: comfortable seats, ices, syrups, footstools for mammas, and wraps; safety from thorough draughts for grand-papas—the inherited hospitality of the clan of Gibson took this form with the sole daughter of their house and home; she had no "parlour tricks."

We remained the latest. It was a full moon, or nearly so—as usual on a balcony; for I remember standing on the balcony with Leah.

A belated Italian organ-grinder stopped beneath us and played a tune from *I Lombardi*, called "La mia letizia." Leah's hair was done up for the first time—in two heavy black bands that hid her little ears and framed her narrow chinny face—with a yellow bow plastered on behind. Such was the fashion then, a hideous fashion enough—but we knew no better. To me she looked so lovely in her long white frock—long for the first time—that Tavistock Square became a broad Venetian moonlit lagoon, and the dome of University College an old Italian church, and "La mia letizia" the song of Adria's gondolier.

I asked her what she thought of Barty.

"I really don't know," she said. "He's not a bit romantic, is he?"

"No; but he's very handsome. Don't you think so?"

"Oh yes indeed—much too handsome for a man. It seems such waste. Why, I now remember seeing him when I was quite a little girl, three or four years ago, at the Duke of Wellington's funeral. He had his bearskin on. Papa pointed him out to us, and said he looked like such a pretty girl! And we all wondered who he could be! And so sad he looked! I suppose it was for the Duke.

"I couldn't think where I'd seen him before, and now I remember—and there's a photograph of him in a stall at the Crystal Palace. Have you seen it? Not that he looks like a girl now! Not a bit! I suppose you're very fond of him? Ida is! She talks as much about Mr. Josselin as she does about you! *Barty*, she calls him."

"Yes, indeed; he's like our brother. We were boys at school together in France. My sister calls him *thee* and *thou*; in French, you know."

"And was he always like that—funny and jolly and good-natured?"

"Always; he hasn't changed a bit."

"And is he very sincere?"

Just then Barty came on to the balcony: it was time to go. My sister had been fetched away already (in her gondola).

So Barty made his farewells, and bent his gallant, irresistible look of mirthful chivalry and delicate middle-aged admiration on Leah's upturned face, and her eyes looked up more piercing and blacker than ever; and in each of them a little high light shone like a point of interrogation—the reflection of some white window-curtain, I suppose; and I felt cold all down my back.

(Barty's daughter, Mary Trevor, often sings a little song of De Musset's. It is quite lovely, and begins—

"Beau chevalier qui partez pour la guerre,
Qu'allez-vous faire
Si loin d'ici?
Voyez-vous pas que la nuit est profonde,
Et que le monde
N'est que souci?"

It is called "*La Chanson de Barberine*," and I never hear it but I think of that sweet little white virginal *point d'interrogation*, and Barty going away to France.)

Then he thanked Mrs. Gibson and said pretty things, and finally called Mr. Gibson dreadful French fancy names: "*Cascamèche—moutardier du pape, tromblon-bolivard, vieux coquelicot*;" to each of which the delighted Mr. G. answered—

"*Voos ayt oon ôter—voos ayt oon ôter!*"

And then Barty whisked himself away in a silver cloud of glory. A good exit!

Outside a hansom was waiting, with a carpet-bag on the top,

and we got into it and drove up to Hampstead Heath, to some little inn called the Bull and Bush, near North-end.

Barty lit his pipe and said—

“What capital people! Hanged if they’re not the nicest people I ever met!”

“Yes,” said I.

And that’s all that was said during that long drive.

At North-end we found two or three others hansoms, and Pepys and Ticklets and the little Hebrew tenor art student whose name I’ve forgotten, and several others.

We had another supper, and made a night of it. There was a piano in a small room opening on to a kind of little terrace, with



“A LITTLE WHITE POINT OF INTERROGATION”

geraniums, over a bow-window. We had music and singing of all sorts. Even *I* sang—“The Standard Bearer”—and rather well. My sister had coached me; but I did not obtain an encore.

The next day dawned, and Barty had a wash and changed his clothes, and we walked all over Hampstead Heath, and saw London lying in a dun mist, with the dome and gilded cross of St. Paul’s rising into the pale blue dawn; and I thought what a beastly place London would be without Barty—but that Leah was still there, safe and sound asleep in Tavistock Square!

Then back to the inn for breakfast. Barty, as usual, fresh as paint. Happy Barty, off to Paris!

And then we all drove down to London Bridge to see him safe into the Boulogne steamer. All his luggage was on board. His late soldier-servant was there—a splendid fellow, chosen for his length

and breadth as well as his fidelity; also the Snowdrop, who was lachrymose and in great grief. It was a most affectionate farewell all round.

"Good-bye, Bob. I won that toss—*didn't I?*"

Oddly enough, I was thinking of that, and didn't like it.

"What rot! it's only a joke, old fellow!" said Barty.

All this about an innocent little girl just fifteen, the daughter of a low-comedy John Gilpin: a still somewhat gaunt little girl, whose budding charms of colour, shape, and surface were already such that it didn't matter whether she were good or bad, gentle or simple, rich or poor, sensible or an utter fool.

C'est toujours comme ça!

We watched the steamer pick its sunny way down the Thames, with Barty waving his hat by the man at the wheel; and I walked westward with the little Hebrew artist, who was so affected at parting with his hero that he had tears in his lovely voice. It was not till I had complimented him on his wonderful B-flat that he got consoled; and he talked about himself, and his B-flat, and his middle G, and his physical strength, and his eye for colour, all the way from the Mansion House to the Foundling Hospital; when we parted, and he went straight to his drawing board at the British Museum—an anticlimax!

I found my mother and sister at their late breakfast, and was scolded and I told them Barty had got off, and wouldn't come back for long—it might not be for years!

"Thank Heaven!" said my dear mother, and I was not pleased.

Says my sister—

"Do you know, he's actually stolen Leah's photograph, that she gave me for my birthday. He asked me for it and I wouldn't give it to him—and it's gone!"

Then I washed and put on my work-a-day clothes, and went straight to Barge Yard, Bucklersbury, and made myself a bed on the floor with my greatcoat, and slept all day.

O heavens! what a dull book this would be, and how dismally it would drag its weary length along, if it weren't all about the author of *Sardonyx*!

But is there a lost corner anywhere in this planet where English is spoken (or French), in which *The Martian* won't be bought and treasured, and spelt over and over again, like a novel by Dickens or Scott (or Dumas)—for Josselin's dear sake! What a fortune my publishers would make if I were not a man of business and they were not the best and most generous publishers in the world! And all Josselin's publishers—French, English, German, and what not—down to modern Sanscrit! What millionaires—if it hadn't been for this little busy bee of a Bob Maurice!

Poor Barty! I am here! à bon chat, bon rat!

And what on earth do I want a fortune for? Barty's dead, and

I've got so much more than I need, who am of a frugal mind—and what I've got is going to little Josselins, who have already got so much more than *they* need, what with their late father and me; and my sister, who is a widow and childless, and "*riche à millions*" too! and cares for nobody in all this wide world but little Josselins, who don't care for money in the least, and would sooner work for their living—even break stones on the road—anything sooner than loaf and laze and loll through life. We all have to give most of it away—not that I need proclaim it from the house-tops! It is but a dull and futile hobby, giving away to those who deserve; they soon leave off deserving.

How fortunate that so much money is really wanted by people who don't deserve it any more than I do; and who, besides, are so weak and stupid and lazy and honest—or so incurably dishonest—that they can't make it for themselves! I have to look after a good many of these people. Barty was fond of them, honest or not. They are so incurably prolific; and so was he, poor dear boy! but, oh, the difference! Grapes don't grow on thorns, nor figs on thistles!

I'm a thorn, alas! in my own side, more often than not—and a thistle in the sides of a good many other donkeys, whom I feed because they're too stupid or too lazy to feed themselves! But at least I know my place, and the knowledge is more bother to me than all my money, and the race of Maurice will soon be extinct.

When Barty went to foreign parts, on the 2nd of May 1856, I didn't trouble myself about such questions as these.

Life was so horribly stale in London without Barty, that I became a quite exemplary young man when I woke up from that long nap on the floor of my laboratory in Barge Yard, Bucklersbury; a reformed character: from sheer grief, I really believe!

I thought of many things—ugly things—very ugly things indeed—and meant to have done with them. I thought of some very handsome things too—a pair of beautiful crown-jewels, each rare as the black tulip—and in each of them a bright little sign like this:—

I don't believe I ever gave my father another bad quarter of an hour from that moment. I even went to church on Sunday mornings quite regularly; not his own somewhat severe place of worship, it is true! But the Foundling Hospital. There, in the gallery, would I sit with my sister, and listen to Miss Dolby and Miss Louisa Pyne and Mr. Lawler the bass—and a tenor and alto whose names I cannot recall; and I thought they sang as they ought to have sung, and was deeply moved and comforted—more than by any preachments in the world; and just in the opposite gallery sat Leah and her mother; and I grew fond of nice clean little boys and girls who sing pretty hymns in unison; and afterwards I watched them eat their roast beef, small mites of three and four or five, some of them, and thought how touching it all was—I don't know why! Love or grief?

or that touch of nature that makes the whole world kin at about 1 P.M. on Sunday?

One would think that Barty had exerted a bad influence on me, since he seems to have kept me out of all this that was so sweet and new and fresh and wholesome!

He would have been just as susceptible to such impressions as I; even more so, if the same chance had arisen for him—for he was singularly fond of children, the smaller and poorer the better, even gutter children! and their poor mothers loved him, he was so jolly and generous and kind.

Sometimes I got a letter from him in Blaze, my father's shorthand cipher; it was always brief and bright and hopeful, and full of jokes and funny sketches. And I answered him in Blaze that was long and probably dull.

All that I will tell of him now is not taken from his Blaze letters, but from what he has told me later, by word of mouth—for he was as fond of talking of himself as I of listening—since he was droll and sincere and without guile or vanity; and would have been just as sympathetic a listener as I, if I had cared to talk about Mr. Robert Maurice, of Barge Yard, Bucklersbury. Besides, I am good at hearing between words and reading between the lines, and all that—and love to exercise this faculty.

Well, he reached Paris in due time, and took a small bedroom on at third floor in the Rue du Faubourg Poissonnière—over a cheap hatter's—opposite the Conservatoire de Musique.

On the first night he was awoke by a terrible invasion—such malodorous swarms of all sizes, from a tiny brown speck to a full-grown lentil, that they darkened his bed; and he slept on the tiled floor after making an island of himself by pouring cold water all round him as a kind of moat; and so he slept for a week of nights, until he had managed to poison off most of these invaders with *poudre insecticide* . . . “mort aux punaises!”

In the daytime he first of all went for a swim at the Passy baths—an immense joy, full of the ghosts of bygone times; then he would spend the rest of his day revisiting old haunts—often sitting on the edge of the stone fountain in the rond-point of the Avenue du Prince Impérial, or de l'Impératrice, or whatever it was—to gaze comfortably at the outside of the old school, which was now a pensionnat de demoiselles: soon to be pulled down and make room for a new house altogether. He did not attempt to invade these precincts of maiden innocence; but gazed and gazed, and remembered and realised and dreamt: it all gave him unspeakable excitement, and a strange, tender, wistful, melancholy delight for which there is no name. Je connais ça! I also, ghostlike, have paced round the haunts of my childhood.

When the joy of this faded, as it always must when indulged in too freely, he amused himself by sitting in his bedroom and painting

Leah's portrait, enlarged and in oils; partly from the very vivid image he had preserved of her in his mind, partly from the stolen photograph. At first he got it very like; then he lost all the likeness and could not recover it; and he worked and worked till he got stupid over it, and his mental image faded quite away.

But for a time this minute examination of the photograph (through a powerful lens he bought on purpose), and this delving search into his own deep consciousness of her, into his keen remembrance of every detail of feature and colour and shade of expression, made him realise and idealise and foresee what the face might be some day—and what its owner might become.

And a horror of his life in London came over him like a revelation—a blast—a horrible surprise! Mere sin is ugly when it's no more; and so beastly to remember, unless the sinner be thoroughly acclimatised; and Barty was only twenty-two, and hated deceit and cruelty in any form. Oh, poor, weak, frail fellow-sinner—whether Vivien or Guinevere! How sadly unjust, that loathing, and satiety, and harsh male contempt, should kill man's ruth and pity for thee, that wast so kind to man! what a hellish aftermath!

Poor Barty hadn't the ghost of a notion how to set to work about becoming a painter, and didn't know a soul in Paris he cared to go and consult, although there were many people he might have discovered whom he had known: old schoolfellows, and friends of the Archibald Rohans—who would have been only too glad.

So he took to wandering listlessly about, lunching and dining at cheap suburban restaurants, taking long walks, sitting on benches, leaning over parapets, and longing to tell people who he was, his age, how little money he'd got, what lots of friends he had in England, what a nice little English girl he knew, whose portrait he didn't know how to paint—any idiotic nonsense that came into his head, so at least he might talk about something or somebody that interested him.

There is no city like Paris, no crowd like a Parisian crowd, to make you feel your solitude if you are alone in its midst!

At night he read French novels in bed and drank eau sucrée and smoked till he was sleepy; then he cunningly put out his light, and lit it again in a quarter of an hour or so, and exploded what remained of the invading hordes as they came crawling down the wall from above. Their numbers were reduced at last; they were disappearing. Then he put out his candle for good, and went to sleep happy—having at least scored for once in the twenty-four hours. Mort aux punaises!

Twice he went down to the Opéra Comique, and saw *Richard Cœur de Lion* and *Le Pré aux Clercs* from the gallery, and was disappointed, and couldn't understand why he couldn't sing as well as that—he thought he could sing much better, poor fellow! he had a delightful voice, and charm, and the sense of tune and rhythm, and could please quite wonderfully—but he had no technical

knowledge whatever, and couldn't be depended upon to sing a song twice the same! He trusted to the inspiration of the moment—like an amateur.

Of course he had to be very economical, even about candle ends, and almost liked such economy for a change; but he got sick of his loneliness, beyond expression—he was a fish out of water.

Then he took it into his head to go and copy a picture at the Louvre—an old master; in this he felt he could not go wrong. He obtained the necessary permission, bought a canvas six feet high, and sat himself before a picture by Nicolas Poussin, I think: a group of angelic women carrying another woman through the air up to heaven.

They were not very much to his taste, but more so than any others. His chief notion about women in pictures was that they should be very beautiful—since they cannot make themselves agreeable in any other way; and they are not always so in the works of the great masters. At least, *he* thought not. These are matters of taste, of course.

He had no notion of how to divide his canvas into squares—a device by which one makes it easier to get the copy into proper proportion, it seems. He began by sketching the head of the principal woman roughly in the middle of his canvas, and then he wanted to begin painting it at once—he was so impatient.

Students, female students especially, came and interested themselves in his work, and some *rapins* asked him questions, and tried to help him and give him tips. But the more they told him, the more helpless and hopeless he grew. He soon felt conscious he was becoming quite a funny man again—a centre of interest—in a new line; but it gave him no pleasure whatever.

After a week of this mistaken drudgery he sat despondent one afternoon on a bench in the Champs Élysées and watched the gay people, and thought himself very down on his luck; he was tired and hot and miserable—it was the beginning of July. If he had known how, he would have shed tears. His loneliness was not to be borne, and his longing to feel once more the north had become a chronic ache.

A tall, thin, shabby man came and sat by his side, and made himself a cigarette, hummed a tune—a well-known quartier-latin song—about “*Mon Aldegonde, ma blonde,*” and “*Ma Rodogune, ma brune.*”

Barty just glanced at this jovial person and found he didn't look jovial at all, but rather sad and seedy and out at elbows—by no means of the kind that the fair Aldegonde or her dark sister would have much to say to.

Also that he wore very strong spectacles, and that his brown eyes, when turned Barty's way, vibrated with a quick, tremulous motion and sideways, as if they had the “gigs.”

Much moved and excited, Barty got up and put out his hand to the stranger, and said—

"Bonjour, Monsieur Bonzig! comment allez-vous?"

Bonzig opened his eyes at this well-dressed Briton (for Barty had clothes to last him a French lifetime).

"Pardonnez-moi, monsieur—mais je n'ai pas l'honneur de vous remettre!"



"BONJOUR, MONSIEUR BONZIG"

"Je m'appelle Jesselin—de chez Brossard!"

"Ah! Mon Dieu, mon cher, mon très-cher!" said Bonzig, and got up and seized Barty's both hands—and all but hugged him.

"Mais quel bonheur de vous revoir! Je pense à vous si souvent, et à Ouittébé! comme vous êtes changé—et quel beau garçon vous

êtes! qui vous aurait reconnu! Dieu de Dieu—c'est un rêve! Je n'en reviens pas!" &c., &c. . . .

And they walked off together, and told the other each an epitome of his history since they parted; and dined together cheaply, and spent a happy evening walking up and down the boulevards, and smoking many cigarettes—from the Madeleine to the Porte St. Martin and back—again and again.

"Non, mon cher Josselin," said Bonzig, in answer to a question of Barty's—"non, I have not yet seen the sea . . .; it will come in time. But at least I am no longer a damned usher (*un sacré pion d'études*); I am an artist—*un peintre de marines*—at last! It is a happy existence. I fear my talent is not very imposing, but my perseverance is exceptional, and I am only forty-five. Anyhow, I am able to support myself—not in splendour, certainly; but my wants are few and my health is perfect. I will put you up to many things, my dear boy. . . . We will storm the citadel of fame together. . . ."

Bonzig had a garret somewhere, and painted in the studio of a friend, not far from Barty's lodgings. This friend, one Lirieux, was a very clever young man, a genius, according to Bonzig. He drew illustrations on wood with surprising quickness and facility and verve, and painted little oil pictures of sporting life—a *garde champêtre* in a wood with his dog, or with his dog on a dusty road, or crossing a stream, or getting over a stile, and so forth. The dog was never left out; and these things he would sell for twenty, thirty, even fifty francs. He painted very quick and very well. He was also a capital, good fellow, industrious and cultivated and refined, and full of self-respect.

Next to his studio he had a small bedroom which he shared with a younger brother, who had just got a small government appointment that kept him at work all day, in some *ministère*. In this studio Bonzig painted his *marines*—still helping himself from *La France Maritime*, as he used to do at Brossard's.

He was good at masts and cordage against an evening sky—"l'heure où le jaune de Naples rentre dans la nature," as he called it. He was also excellent at foam, and far-off breakers, and sea-gulls, but very bad at the human figure—sailors and fishermen and their wives. Sometimes Lirieux would put one in for him with a few dabs.

As soon as Bonzig had finished a picture, which didn't take very long, he carried it round, still wet, to the small dealers, bearing it very carefully aloft, so as not to smudge it. Sometimes (if there were a sailor by Lirieux) he would get five or even ten francs for it; and then it was "*Mon Aldegonde*" with him all the rest of the day; for success always took the form, in his case, of nasally humming that amorous refrain.

But it very often happened that he was dumb, poor fellow—no supper, no song!

Lirieux conceived such a liking for Barty that he insisted on

taking him into his studio as a pupil-assistant, and setting him to draw things under his own eye; and Barty would fill Bonzig's French seapieces with Whitby fishermen, and Bonzig got to sing "*Mon Aldegonde*" much oftener than before.

And chumming with these two delightful men, Barty grew to know a clean, quiet happiness which more than made up for lost past splendours and dissipations and gay dishonour. He wasn't even funny; they wouldn't have understood it. Well-bred Frenchmen don't understand English fun—not even in the quartier latin, as a general rule. Not that's its too subtle for them; *that's* not why!

Thus pleasantly August wore itself away, Bonzig and Barty nearly always dining together for about a franc a piece, including the waiter, and not badly. Bonzig knew all the cheap eating-houses in Paris, and what each was specially renowned for—"bonne friture," "fricassée de lapin," "pommes sautées," "soupe aux choux," &c., &c.

Then after dinner, a long walk and talk and cigarettes—or they would look in at a *café chantant*, a *bal de barrière*, the gallery of a cheap theatre—then a bock outside a *café*—et bonsoir la compagnie!

On September the 1st, Lirieux and his brother went to see their people in the south, leaving the studio to Bonzig and Barty, who made the most of it, though greatly missing the genial young painter, both as a companion and a master and guide.

One beautiful morning Bonzig called for Barty at his *crémérie*, and proposed they should go by train to some village near Paris, and spend a happy day in the country, lunching on bread and wine and sugar at some little roadside inn. Bonzig made a great deal of this lunch. It had evidently preoccupied him.

Barty was only too delighted. They went on the *impériale* of the Versailles train, and got out at Ville d'Avray, and found the kind of little pothouse they wanted. And Barty had to admit that no better lunch for the price could be than "small blue wine" sweetened with sugar, and a hunch of bread sopped in it.

Then they had a long walk in pretty woods and meadows, sketching by the way, chatting to labourers and soldiers and farm-people, smoking endless cigarettes of caporal; and finally they got back to Paris the way they came—so hungry that Barty proposed they should treat themselves for once to a "*prix-fixe*" dinner at Carmagnol's, in the Passage Choiseul, where they gave you *hors-d'œuvres*, potage, three courses and dessert and a bottle of wine, for two francs fifty—and everything scrupulously clean.

So to the Passage Choiseul they went; but just on the threshold of the famous restaurant (which filled the entire arcade with its appetising exhalations) Bonzig suddenly remembered to his great regret, that close by there lived a young married couple of the name of Lousteau, who were great friends of his, and who expected him to dine with them at least once a week.

"I haven't been near them for a fortnight, *mon cher*, and it is just

their dinner-hour. I am afraid I must really just run in and eat an *aile de poulet* and a *pêche au vin* with them, and give them my news, or they will be mortally offended. I'll be back with you just when you are '*entre la poire et le fromage*'—so, sans adieu!" and he bolted.

Barty went in and selected his menu; and waiting for his hors-d'œuvre, he just peeped out of the door and looked up and down the arcade, which was always festive and lively at that hour.

To his great surprise he saw Bonzig leisurely flâning about with his cigarette in his mouth, his hands in his pockets, his long spectacled nose in the air—gazing at the shop windows. Suddenly the good man dived into a baker's shop, and came out again in half a minute with a large brown roll, and began to munch it—still gazing at the shop windows, and apparently quite content.

Barty rushed after and caught hold of him, and breathlessly heaped bitter reproaches on him for his base and unfriendly want of confidence—snatched his roll and threw it away, dragged him by main force into Carmagnol's and made him order the dinner he preferred, and sit opposite.

"Ma foi, mon cher!" said Bonzig—"I own to you that I am almost at the end of my resources for the moment—and also that the prospect of a good dinner in your amiable company is the reverse of disagreeable to me. I thank you in advance, with all my heart!"

"My dear M'sieur Bonzig," says Barty, "you will wound me deeply if you don't look on me like a brother, as I do you; I can't tell you how deeply you *have* wounded me already! Give me your word of honour that you will share ma mangeaille with me till I haven't a sou left!"

And so they made it up, and had a capital dinner and a capital evening, and Barty insisted that in future they should always mess together at his expense till better days—and they did.

But Barty found that his own money was just giving out, and wrote to his bankers in London for more. Somehow it didn't arrive for nearly a week; and they knew at last what it was to dine for five sous each (2½d.)—with a loss of appetite just before the meal instead of after.

Of course Barty might very well have pawned his watch or his scarf-pin; but whatever trinkets he possessed had been given him by his beloved Lady Archibald—everything pawnable he had in the world, even his guitar! And he could not bear the idea of taking them to the "Monte de Piété."

So he was well pleased one Sunday morning when his remittance arrived, and he went in search of his friend, that they might compensate themselves for a week's abstinence by a famous déjeuner. But Bonzig was not to be found; and Barty spent that day alone, and gorged in solitude and guzzled in silence—moult tristement, à l'anglaise.

He was aroused from his first sleep that night by the irruption of Bonzig in a tremendous state of excitement. It seems that a certain

Baron (whose name I've forgotten), and whose little son the ex-usher had once coached in early Latin and Greek, had written, begging him to call and see him at his château near Melun; that Bonzig had walked there that very day—thirty miles; and found the Baron was leaving next morning for a villa he possessed near Étretat, and wished him to join him there the day after, and stay with him for a couple of months—to coach his son in more classics for a couple of hours in the forenoon.

Bonzig was to dispose of the rest of his time as he liked, except that he was commissioned to paint six "marines" for the baronial dining-room; and the Baron had most considerably given him four hundred francs in advance!

"So then, to-morrow afternoon at six, my dear Josselin, you can dine with *me*, for once—not in the Passage Choiseul this time, good as it is there! But at Babet's, en plein Palais Royal! un jour de séparation, vous comprenez! the dinner will be good, I promise you: a calf's head à la vinaigrette—they are famous for that at Babet's—and for their Pauillac and their St.-Estèphe; at least I'm told, so! nous en ferons l'expérience. . . . And now I bid you good-night, as I have to be up before the day—so many things to buy and settle and arrange—first of all to procure myself a "maillot" and a "peignoir", and shoes for the beach! I know where to get these things much cheaper than at the seaside. Oh! la mer, la mer! Enfin je vais piquer ma tête [take my header] là dedans—*et pas plus tard qu'après-demain soir* À demain, très-cher camarade—six heures—chez Babet!"

And delirious with joyful anticipations, the good Bonzig ran away—all but "piquant sa tête" down the narrow staircase, and whistling "Mon Aldegonde" at the very top of his whistle; and even outside he shouted—

"Ouille—mé—sekile rô
sekile rô,
sekile rô . . .
Ouille—mé—sekile rô
Tat brinn my laddé ôme!"

He had to be silenced by a sergent de ville.

And next day they dined at Babet's, and Bonzig was so happy he had to beg pardon for his want of feeling at seeming so exuberant, "un jour de séparation! mais venez aussi, Josselin—nous piquerons nos têtes ensemble, et nagerons de conserve. . . ."

But Barty could not afford this little outing, and he was very sad—with a sadness that not all the Pauillac and St.-Estèphe in M. Babet's cellars could have dispelled.

He made his friend a present of a beautiful pair of razors—English razors, which he no longer needed, since he no longer meant to shave—"en signe de mon deuil!" as he said. They had been the gift of Lord Archibald in happier days. Alas! he had forgotten to give his uncle Archie the traditional halfpenny, but he took good care to extract a sou from le grand Bouzig!

So ended this little episode in Barty's life. He never saw Bonzig again, nor heard from him, and of him only once more. That sou was wasted.

It was at Blankenberghe, on the coast of Belgium, that he at last had news of him—a year later—at the café on the plage, and in such



“DEMI-TASSE—VOILÀ, M'SIEUR”

an odd and unexpected manner that I can't help telling how it happened.

One afternoon a corner of the big coffee-room was being arranged for private theatricals, in which Barty was to perform the part of a waiter. He had just borrowed the real waiter's jacket and apron, and was dusting the little tables for the amusement of Mlle. Solange, the dame de comptoir, and of the waiter, Prosper, who had on Barty's own shooting-jacket.

Suddenly an old gentleman came in and beckoned to Barty and ordered a demi-tasse and petit-verre. There were no other customers at that hour.

Mlle. Solange was horrified; but Barty insisted on waiting on the old gentleman in person, and helping him to his coffee and pousse-café with all the humorous grace I can so well imagine, and handed him the *Indépendance Belge*, and went back to superintend the arrangements for the coming play.

Presently the old gentleman looked up from his paper and became interested, and soon he grew uneasy, and finally he rose and went up to Barty and bowed, and said (in French, of course)—

"Monsieur, I have made a very stupid mistake. I am near-sighted, and that must be my apology. Besides, you have revenged yourself 'avec tant d'esprit,' that you will not bear me *rancune*! May I ask you to accept my card, with my sincere excuses? . . .

And lo! it was Bonzig's famous Baron! Barty immediately inquired after his lost friend.

"Bonzig? Ah, monsieur—what a terrible tragedy! Poor Bonzig, the best of men—he came to me at Étretat. I invited him there from sheer friendship! He was drowned the very evening he arrived.

"He went and bathed after sunset—on his own responsibility and without mentioning it to any one. How it happened I don't know—nobody knows. He was a good swimmer, I believe, but very blind without his glasses. He undressed behind a rock on the shore, which is against the regulations. His body was not found till two days after, three leagues down the coast.

"He had an aged mother, who came to Étretat. It was harrowing! They were people who had seen better days." &c., &c., &c.

And so no more of le grand Bonzig.

Nor did Barty ever again meet Lirieux, in whose existence a change had also been wrought by fortune; but whether for good or evil I can't say. He was taken to Italy and Greece by a wealthy relative. What happened to him there—whether he ever came back, or succeeded or failed—Barty never heard. He dropped out of Barty's life as completely as if he had been drowned like his old friend.

These episodes, like many others past and to come in this biography, had no particular influence on Barty Josselin's career, and no reference to them is to be found in anything he has written. My only reason for telling them is that I found them so interesting when he told *me*, and so characteristic of himself. He was "bon raconteur." I'm afraid I'm not, and that I've lugged these good people in by the hair of the head; but I'm doing my best. "*La plus belle fille au monde ne peut donner que ce qu'elle a!*"

I look to my editor to edit me—and to my illustrator to pull me through.

That autumn (1856) my father went to France for six weeks, on business. My sister Ida went with the Gibsons to Ramsgate, and I

remained in London with my mother. I did my best to replace my father in Barge Yard, and when he came back he was so pleased with me (and I think with himself also) that he gave me twenty pounds, and said, "Go to Paris for a week, Bob, and see Barty, and give him this with my love."

And "this" was another twenty-pound note. He had never given me such a sum in my life—not a quarter of it; and "this" was the first time he had ever tipped Barty.

Things were beginning at last to go well with him. He had arranged to sell the vintages of Bordeaux and Champagne, as well as those of Burgundy; and was dreaming of those of Germany and Portugal and Spain. Fortune was beginning to smile on Barge Yard, and ours was to become the largest wine business in the world—*comme tout un chacun sait*.

I started for Paris that very night, and knocked on Barty's bedroom door by six next morning; it was hardly daylight—a morning to be remembered; and what a breakfast at Babet's, after a rather cold swim in the Passy school of natation, and a walk all round the outside of the school that was once ours!

Barty looked very well, but very thin, and his small sprouting beard and moustache had quite altered the character of his face. I shall distress my lady readers if I tell them the alteration was not an improvement; so I won't.

What a happy week that was to me I leave to the reader's imagination. We took a large double-bedded room at the Hôtel de Lille et d'Albion in case we might want to smoke and talk all night; we did, I think, and had our coffee brought up to us in the morning.

I will not attempt to describe the sensations of a young man going back to his beloved Paris "after five years." *Tout ça c'est de l'histoire ancienne*. And Barty and Paris together—that is not for such a pen as mine.

I showed him a new photograph of Leah Gibson—a very large one and an excellent. He gazed at it a long time, with his magnifying-glass and without, all his keen perceptions on the alert; and I watched his face narrowly.

"My eyes! She is a beautiful young woman, and no mistake!" he said, with a sigh. "You mustn't let her slip through your fingers, Bob!"

"How about that toss?" said I, and laughed.

"Oh, I resign my claim; she's not for the likes o' me. You're going to be a great capitalist—a citizen of credit and renown. I'm Mr. Nobody, of nowhere. Go in and win my boy; you have my best wishes. If I can scrape together enough money to buy myself a white waistcoat and a decent coat, I'll be your best man; or some left-off things of yours might do—we're about of a size, aren't we? You've become *très bel homme*, Bob, plutôt *bel homme que joli garçon*, hein? That's what women are fond of; English women especially. I'm nowhere now, without my uniform and the rest.

Is it still Skinner who builds for you? Good old Skinner! Mes compliments!"

This simple little speech took a hidden weight off my mind and left me very happy. I confided frankly to the good Barty that no Sally in any alley had ever been more warmly adored by any industrious young London apprentice than was Leah Gibson by me!

"Ça y est, alors! Je te félicite d'avance, et je garde mes larmes pour quand tu seras parti. Allons dîner chez Babet: j'ai soif de boire à ton bonheur!"

Before I left we met an English artist fellow he had known at the British Museum—an excellent fellow, one Walters, who took him under his wing, and was the means of his entering the atelier Tropolong in the Rue des Belges as an art student. And thus Barty began his studies in a proper and legitimate way. It was characteristic of him that this should never have occurred to him before.

So when I parted with the dear fellow things were looking a little brighter for him too.

All through the winter he worked very hard—the first to come, the last to go; and enjoyed his studio life thoroughly.

Such readers as I am likely to have will not require to be told what the interior of a French atelier of the kind is like, nor its domestic economy; nor will I attempt to describe all the fun and the frolic, although I heard it from Barty in after-years, and very good it was. I almost felt I'd studied there myself! He was a prime favourite—"le Beau Josselin," as he was called.

He made very rapid progress, and had already begun to work in colours by the spring. He made many friends, but led a quiet industrious life, unrelieved (as far as I know) by any of those light episodes one associates with student life in Paris. His principle amusements through the long winter evenings were the café and the brasserie, mild écarté, a game at billiards or dominoes, and long talks about art and literature with the usual unkempt young geniuses of the place and time—French, English, American.

Then he suddenly took it into his head to go to Antwerp; I don't know who influenced him in this direction, but I arranged to meet him there at the end of April—and we spent a delightful week together, staying at the "Grand Laboureur" in the Place de Meer. The town was still surrounded by the old walls and the moat, and of a picturesqueness that seemed as if it would never pall.

Twice or three times that week British tourists and travellers landed at the quai by the Place Verte from *The Baron Osy*—and this landing was Barty's delight.

The sight of fair, fresh English girls, with huge crinolines, and their hair done up in chenille nets, made him long for England again, and the sound of their voices went high to weakening his resolve. But he stood firm to the last, and saw me off by *The Baron*. I felt a "serrement de cœur" as I left him standing there, so firm, as if he had been put "au piquet" by M. Dumollard! and so thin and tall

and slender—and his boyish face so grave. Good heavens! how much alone he seemed, who was so little built to live alone!

It is really not too much to say that I would have given up to him everything I possessed in the world—every blessed thing! except Leah—and Leah was not mine to give!

Now and again Barty's face would take on a look so ineffably, pathetically, angelically simple and childlike that it moved one to the very depths, and made one feel like father and mother to him in one! It was the true revelation of his innermost soul, which in many ways remained that of a child even in his middle age and till he died. All his life he never quite put away childish things!

I really believe that in bygone ages he would have moved the world with that look, and been another Peter the Hermit!

He became a pupil at the academy under De Keyser and Van Lierus, and worked harder than ever.

He took a room nearly all window on a second floor in the *Marché aux Œufs*, just under the shadow of the gigantic spire which rings a fragment of melody every seven minutes and a half—and the whole tune at midnight, fortissimo.

He laid in a stock of cigars at less than a centime a piece, and dried them in the sun; they left as he smoked them a firm white ash two inches long; and he grew so fond of them that he cared to smoke nothing else.

He rose before the dawn, and went for a swim more than a mile away—got to the academy at six—worked till eight—breakfasted on a little roll called a *pistolet*, and a cup of coffee; then the academy again from nine till twelve—when dinner, the cheapest he had ever known, but not the worst. Then work again all the afternoon, copying old masters at the Gallery. Then a cheap supper, a long walk along the quais or ramparts or outside—a game of dominoes, and a glass or two of "*Malines*" or "*Louvain*"—then bed, without invading hordes; the Flemish are as clean as the Dutch; and there he would soon smoke and read himself to sleep in spite of chimes—which lull you, when once you get "*achimatised*," as he called it, meaning of course to be funny: a villainous kind of fun—caught, I fear, in Barge Yard, Bucklersbury. It used to rain puns in the City—especially in the Stock Exchange, which is close to Barge Yard.

It was a happy life, and he grew to like it better than any life he had led yet; besides, he improved rapidly, as his facility was great—for painting as for everything he tried his hand at.

He also had a very agreeable social existence.

One morning at the academy, two or three days after his arrival, he was accosted by a fellow-student—one Tescheles—who introduced himself as an old pupil of Troplong's in the *Rue des Belges*. They had a long chat in French about the old Paris studio. Among other things, Tescheles asked if there were still any English there.

"Oui"—says Barty—"un nommé Valtères" . . .

Barty pronounced this name as if it were French; and noticed that Tescheles smiled, exclaiming—

"Parbleu, ce bon Valtères—je l'connais bien!"



PETER THE HERMIT AU PIQUET

Next day Tescheles came up to an English student called Fox and said—

"Well, old stick-in-the-mud, how are you getting on?"

"Why, you don't mean to say you're an Englishman?" says Barty to Tescheles.

"Good heavens! you don't mean to say you are! fancy your calling poor old Walters *Valtères*!"

And after that they became very intimate, and that was a good thing for Barty.

The polyglot Tescheles was of a famous musical family, of mixed German and Russian origin, naturalised in England and domiciled in France—a true cosmopolite and a wonderful linguist, besides being also a cultivated musician and excellent painter; and all the musicians, famous or otherwise, that passed through Antwerp made his rooms a favourite resort and house of call. And Barty was introduced into a world as delightful to him as it was new—and to music that ravished his soul with a novel enchantment: Chopin, Liszt, Wagner, Schumann—and he found that Schubert had written a few other songs besides the famous "*Serenade*!"

One evening he was even asked if he could make music himself, and actually volunteered to sing—and sang that famous ballad of Balfe's which seems destined to become immortal in this country—"When other lips" . . . *alias*, "Then you'll remember me."

Strange to say, it was absolutely new to this high musical circle, but they went quite mad over it; and the beautiful melody got naturalised from that moment in Belgium and beyond, and Barty was proclaimed the primo tenore of Antwerp—although he was only a barytone!

A fortnight after this Barty heard "When other lips" played by the "Guides" band in the park at Brussels. Its first appearance out of England—all through him.

Then he belonged to the Antwerp "Cercle Artistique," where he made many friends and was very popular, as I can well imagine.

Thus he was happier than he had ever been in his life; but for one thing that plagued him now and again—his oft-recurring desire to be conscious once more of the north, which he had not felt for four or five years.

The want of this sensation at certain periods—especially at night—would send a chill thrill of desolation through him like a wave; a wild panic, a quick agony, as though the true meaning of absolute loneliness were suddenly realised by a lightning flash of insight, and it were to last for ever and ever.

This would pass away in a second or two, but left a haunting recollection behind for many hours. And then all was again sunshine, and the world was made of friends—and solitude was impossible evermore.

One memorable morning this happiness received a check, and a great horror befell him. It was towards the end of the summer—just before the vacation.

With a dozen others, he was painting the head of an old man from the life, when he became quite suddenly conscious of something strange in his sight. First he shut his left eye and saw with his right quite perfectly; then he shut the right, and lo! whatever he looked at with the left dwindled to a vanishing point and became invisible. No rubbing or bathing of his eye would alter the terrible fact, and he knew what great fear really means, for the first time.

Much kind concern was expressed, and Van Lerius told him to go at once to a Monsieur Noiret, a professor at the Catholic University of Louvain, who had attended *him* for the eyes, and had the reputation of being the first oculist in Belgium.

Barty wrote immediately and an appointment was made, and in three days he saw the great man, half professor, half priest, who took him into a dark chamber lighted by a lamp, and dilated his pupil with atropine, and looked into his eye with the newly-discovered "ophthalmoscope."

Professor Noiret told him it was merely a congestion of the retina—for which no cause could be assigned; and that he would be cured in less than a month. That he was to have a seton let into the back of his neck, dry-cup himself on the chest and thighs night and morning, and take a preparation of mercury three times a day. Also that he must go to the seaside immediately—and he recommended Ostend.

Barty told him that he was an impecunious art student, and that Ostend was a very expensive place.

Noiret considerably recommended Blankenberghe, which was cheap; asked and took his full fee, and said, with a courtly priestly bow—

"If you are not cured, come back in a month. *Au revoir!*"

So poor Barty had the seton put in by a kind of barbe-surgeon, and was told how to dress it night and morning; got his medicines and his dry-cupping apparatus, and went off to Blankenberghe quite hopeful.

And there things happened to him which I really think are worth telling; in the first place, because, even if they did not concern Barty Josselin, they should be amusing for their own sake—that is, if I could only tell them as he told me afterwards; and I will do my best!

And then he was nearing the end of time when he was to remain as other mortals are. His new life was soon to open, the great change to which we owe the Barty Josselin who had changed the world for us!

Besides, this is a biography—not a novel—not literature! So what does it matter how it's written, so long as it's all true!

PART FIFTH

"Ô céleste haine,
Comment t'assouvir?
Ô souffrance humaine,
Qui te peut guérir?
Si lourde est ma peine
J'en voudrais mourir—
Tel est mon désir!

Nayré de comprendre,
Las de compatir,
Pour ne plus entendre,
Ni voir, ni sentir,
Je suis prêt à rendre
Mon dernier soupir—
Et c'est mon désir!

Ne plus rien connaître,
Ni me souvenir—
Ne jamais renaître,
Ni me rendormir—
Ne plus jamais être,
Mais en bien finir—
Voilà mon désir!"

—ANON.

BARTY went third class to Bruges, and saw all over it, and slept at the "Fleur de Blé," and heard new chimes, and remembered his Long-fellow.

Next morning, a very fine one, as he was hopefully smoking his centime cigar with immense relish near the little three-horsed wagonette that was to bear him to Blankenberghe, he saw that he was to have three fellow-passengers, with a considerable amount of very interesting luggage, and rejoiced.

First, a tall man about thirty, in a very smart white summer suit, surmounted by a jaunty little straw hat with a yellow ribbon. He was strikingly handsome, and wore immense black whiskers but no moustache, and had a most magnificent double row of white pearly teeth, which he showed very much when he smiled, and he smiled very often. He was evidently a personage of importance and very well off, for he gave himself great airs and ordered people about and chaffed them, and it made them laugh instead of making them angry; and he was obeyed with wonderful alacrity. He spoke French fluently, but with a marked Italian accent.

Next, a very blond lady of about the same age, not beautiful, but rather overdressed, and whose accent, when she spoke French, was very German, and who looked as if she might be easily moved to wrath. Now and then she spoke to the gentleman in a very audible

Italian aside, and Barty was able to gather that her Italian was about as rudimentary as his own.

Last and not least, a pale, plain, pathetic little girl of six or eight, with a nose rather swollen, and a black plait down her back, and large black eyes, something like Leah Gibson's; and she never took these eyes off Barty's face.

Their luggage consisted of two big trunks, a guitar and violin (in their cases), and music-books bound together by a rope.

"Vous allez à Blankenberghe, *mossié*?" said the Italian, with a winning smile.

Barty answered in the affirmative, and the Italian smiled ecstatic delight.

"*Jé souis bienn content—nous férons route ensiembélé. . .*" I will translate: "I call myself Carlo Veronese—first barytone of the theatre of La Scala, Milan. The signora is my second wife; she is *prima donna assoluta* of the grand opera, Naples. The little ragazza is my daughter by my first wife. She is the greatest violinist of her age now living—un' prodige, *mossié*—un' fenomeno!"

Barty, charmed with his new acquaintance, gave the signora his card, and Carlo Veronese invited him graciously to take a seat in the wagonette, as if it were his own private carriage. Barty, who was the most easily impressed person that ever lived, accepted with as much sincere gratitude as if he hadn't already paid for his place, and they started on their sunny drive of eight miles along the dusty straight Belgian chaussée, bordered with poplars on either side, and paved with flagstones all the way to Blankenberghe.

Signor Veronese informed Barty that on their holiday travels they always managed to combine profit with pleasure, and that he proposed giving a grand concert at the Café on the Plage, or the Kursaal, next day; that he was going to sing Figaro's great song in the *Barbiere*, and the signora would give "*Roberto, toua qué z'aime*" in French (or, rather, "*Ropert, doi que ch'aime*," as she called it, correcting his accent), and the fenomeno, whose name was Marianina, would play an arrangement of the "Carnival of Venice" by Paganini.

"Ma vous aussi, vous êtes mousicien—*jé vois ça par la votre figure!*"

Barty modestly disclaimed all pretensions, and said he was only an art student—a painter.

"All the arts are brothers," said the signore, and the little signorina stole her hand into Barty's and left it there.

"Listen," said the signore; "why not arrange to live together, you and we? I hate throwing away money on mere pomposity and grandiosity and show. We always take a little furnished apartment, *elle et moi*. Then I go and buy provisions, *bon marché*—and she cooks them—and we have our meals better than at the hotels and at half the price! Join us, unless you like to throw your money by the window!"

The Signorina Marianina's little brown hand gave Barty's a little

warm squeeze, and Barty was only too delighted to accept an arrangement that promised to be so agreeable and so practically wise.

They arrived at Blankenberghe, and, leaving their luggage at the wagonette station, went in search of lodgings. These were soon found in a large attic at the top of a house, over a bakery. One little mansarde, with a truckle-bed and wash-hand stand, did for the family of Veronese; another, smaller still, for Barty.

Other mansardes also opened on to the large attic, or grenier, where there were sacks of grain and of flour, and a sweet smell of cleanliness. Barty wondered that such economical arrangements could suit his new friends, but was well pleased; a weight was taken off his mind. He feared a style of living he could not have afforded to share, and here were all difficulties smoothed away without any trouble whatever.

They got in their luggage, and Barty went with the signore in search of bread and meat and wine and ground coffee. When they got back, a little stove was ready lighted in the Veronese garret; they cooked the food in a frying pan, opening the window wide and closing the door, as the signore thought it useless to inform the world, by the sense of smell, that they did their cooking *en famille*; and Barty enjoyed the meal immensely, and almost forgot his trouble, but for the pain of his seton.

After lunch the signore produced his placards, already printed by hand, and made some paste in an iron pot, and the signora made coffee. And Veronese tuned his guitar and said—

"Je vais vous canter quelque chose—una piccola cosa da niente!—vous comprenez l'Italien?"

"Oh yes," said Barty; he had picked up a deal of Italian and many pretty Italian canzonets from his friend old Pergolese, who kept the Italian eating-house in Rupert Street. "Sing me a stornella—je les adore."

And he set himself to listen, with his heart in his mouth from sheer pleasurable anticipation.

The signore sang a pretty little song, by Gordigiani, called "Il vero amore." Barty knew it well.

"E lo mio amor è andato a soggiornare
A Lucca belle—e diventar signore. . . ."

Alas for lost illusions! The signore's voice was a coarse, unsympathetic, strident buffo bass, not always quite in the middle of the note; nor, in spite of his native liveliness of accent and expression, did he make the song interesting or pretty in the least.

Poor Barty had fallen from the skies; but he did his best not to show his disenchantment, and this, from a kind and amiable way he always had and a constant wish to please, was not difficult.

Then the signora sang "Ô mon Fernand!" from the *Favorita*, in French, but with a hideous German accent and a screech as of some Teutonic peacock, and without a single sympathetic note; though

otherwise well in tune, and with a certain professional knowledge of what she was about.

And then poor Marianina was made to stand up on six music-books, opposite a small music-easel, and play her "Carnival of Venice" on the violin. Every time she made a false note in the difficult variations, her father, with his long, thick, hairy middle finger, gave her a fierce fillip on the nose, and she had to swallow her tears and play on. Barty was almost wild with angry pity, but dissembled, for fear of making her worse enemies in her father and stepmother.

Not that the poor little thing played badly; indeed, she played surprisingly well for her age, and Barty was sincere in his warm commendation of her talent.

"Et vous ne cantez pas du tout—du tout?" said Veronese.

"Oh, si, quelquefois!"

"Cantez couelquécosé—zé vous accompagneria sous la guitare!—n'ayez pas paoure—nous sommes indoulgents, elle et moi——"

"Oh—je m'accompagnerai bien moi-même comme je pourrai," said Barty, and took the guitar, and sang a little French Tyrolienne called "Fleur des Alpes," which he could always sing quite beautifully; and the effect was droll indeed.

Marianina wept; the signore went down on his knees in a theatrical manner to him, and called him "maestro" and other big Italian names; the Frau signora, with tears in her eyes, asked permission to kiss his hand, which his modesty refused—he kissed hers instead.

"He was a great genius, a bird of God, who had amused himself by making fools of poor, innocent, humble, wandering minstrels. Oh, would he not be generous as he was great, and be one of them for a few days, and take half the profits—more—whatever he liked?" &c.

And indeed they immediately saw the business side of the question, and were, to do them justice, immensely liberal in their conditions of partnership—and also most distressingly persistent, with adulations that got more and more fulsome the more he held back.

There was a long discussion. Barty had to be quite brutal at the end—told them he was not a musician, but a painter, and that nothing on earth should induce him to join them in their concert.

And finally, much crestfallen and somewhat huffed, the pair went out to post their placards all over the town, and Barty went for a bath and a long walk—suddenly feeling sad again and horribly one-eyed and maimed, and more wofully northless and homeless and friendless than ever.

Blankenberghe was already very full, and when he got back he saw the famous placards everywhere. And found his friends cooking their dinner, and was pressed to join them; and did so—producing a magnificent pasty and some hot-house grapes and two bottles of wine as a peace-offering—and was forgiven.

And after dinner they all sat on grain-sacks together in the large granary, and made music—with lady's-maids and valets and servants

of the house for a most genial and appreciative audience—and had a very pleasant evening; and Barty came to the conclusion that he had mistaken his trade—that he sang devilish well, in fact; and so he did.

Whatever his technical shortcomings might be, he could make any tune sound pretty when he sang it. He had the native gift of ease, pathos, rhythm, humour, and charm—and a delightful sympathetic twang in his voice. His mother must have sung something like that; and all Paris went mad about her. No technical teaching in the



“THE CARNIVAL OF VENICE”

world can ever match a genuine inheritance; and that's a fact.

Next morning they all bathed together, and Barty unheroically and quite obscurely saved a life.

The signore and his fat white signora went dancing out into the sunny waves and right away seawards.

Then came Barty with an all-round shirt-collar round his neck and a white tie on, to conceal his seton, and a pair of blue spectacles for the glare. And behind him Marianina, hopping on and following as best she might. He turned round to encourage her, and she had suddenly disappeared; half uneasy, he went back a step or two, and saw her little pale-brown face gasping just beneath the surface—she had just got out of her depth.

He snatched her out, and she clung to him like a small monkey and cried dreadfully, and was sick all over him and herself. He managed to get her back on shore, and washed and dried and consoled her before her people came back—and had the tact not to mention this adventure, guessing what fillips she would catch on her poor little

pink nose for her stupidity. She looked her gratitude for this reticence of his in the most touching way, with her big black eyes—and had a cunning smile of delight at their common tacit understanding. Her rescuer from a watery grave did not apply for the “*médaille de sauvetage!*”

Barty took an immense walk that day to avoid the common repast; he was getting very tired of the two senior Veroneses.

The concert in the evening was a tremendous success. The blatant signore sang his Figaro song very well indeed—it suited him better than little feminine love-ditties. The signora was loud and passionate and dramatic in “*Roberto*”; and Belgians make more allowance for a german accent in French than Parisians; besides, it was not *quite* their own language that was being murdered before them. It *may* be, some day! I sincerely hope so. *Je leur veux du bien.*

Poor little Marianina stood on her six music-books and played with immense care and earnestness, just like a frightened but well-trained poodle walking on its hind-legs—one eye on her music and the tail of the other on her father, who accompanied her with his guitar. She got an encore, to Barty's great relief; and to her's too, no doubt—if she hadn't. fillips on the nose for supper that night! Then there were more solos and duets, with obligatos for the violin.

Next day Veronese and his wife were in high feather at the Kursaal, where they had sung the night before.

A very distinguished military foreigner, in attendance on some august personage from Spain or Portugal (and later from Ostend), warmly and publicly complimented the signore on “his admirable rendering of ‘*Largo al factotum*’—which, as his dear old friend Rossini had once told him (the General), he (Rossini) had always modestly looked upon as the one thing he had ever written with which he was *almost* pleased!”

Marianina also received warm commendation from this agreeable old soldier, while quite a fashionable crowd was listening; and Veronese arranged for another concert that evening, and placarded the town accordingly.

Barty managed to escape any more meals in the Casa Veronese, but took Marianina for one or two pleasant walks, and told her stories and sang to her in the grenier, while she improvised for him clever little obligatos on the fiddle.

He found a cheap eating-house and picked up a companion or two to chat with. He also killed time with his seton-dressing and self dry-cupping—and hired French novels and read them as much as he dared with his remaining eye, about which he was morbidly nervous; he always fancied it would get its retina congested like the other, in which no improvement manifested itself whatever—and this depressed him very much. He was a most impatient patient.

To return. The second concert was as conspicuous a failure as the first had been a success: the attendance was small and less dis-

tinguished, and there was no enthusiasm. The Frau signora slipped a note and lost her temper in the middle of "Roberto," and sang out of tune and with careless, open contempt of her audience, and this the audience seemed to understand and openly resent. Poor Marianina was frightened, and played very wrong notes under the furious gaze of her papa, and finally broke down and cried, and there were some hisses for him, as well as kind and encouraging applause for the child. Then up jumps Barty and gets on the platform, and takes the signore's guitar and twangs it, and smiles all round benignly—immense applause!

Then he pats Marianina's thin pale cheeks and wipes her eyes and gives her a kiss. Frantic applause! Then "Fleur des Alpes!"

Ovation! encore! bis! ter!

And for the third encore he sings a very pretty little Flemish ballad about the rose without a thorn—"Het Roosje uit de Dorne." It is the only Flemish song he knows and I hope I have spelt it right! and the audience goes quite crazy with enthusiasm, and everybody goes home happy, even the Veroneses—and Marianina does not get filliped that night.

After this the Veroneses tried humbler spheres for the display of their talents, and in less than a week exhausted every pothouse and beer-tavern and low drinking-shop in Blankenberghe! and at last they took to performing for casual coppers in the open street, and went very rapidly down hill. The signore lost his jauntiness, and grew sordid and soiled and shabby and humble; the signora looked like a sulky, dirty, draggie-tailed fury, ready to break out into violence on the slightest provocation; poor Marianina got paler and thinner, and Barty was very unhappy about her. The only things left rosy about her were her bruised nose, and her fingers, that always seemed stiff with cold; indeed, they were blue rather than rosy—and anything but clean.

One evening he bought her a little warm grey cloak that took his fancy; when he went home after dinner to give it her he found the three birds of song had taken flight—sans tambour ni trompette, and leaving no message for him. The baker-landlord had turned them adrift—sent them about their business, sacrificing some of his rent to get rid of them; not a heavy loss, I fancy.

Barty went after them all over the little town, but did not find them; he heard they were last seen marching off with guitar and liddle in a southerly direction along the coast, and found that their fuggage was to be sent to Ostend.

He felt very sorry for Marianina and missed her—and gave the cloak to some poor child in the town, and was very lonely.

One morning as he loafed about dejectedly with his hands in his pockets, he found his way to the little Hôtel de Ville, whence issued sounds of music. He went in. It was like a kind of reading-room and concert-room combined; there was a piano there, and a young lady practising, with her mother knitting by her side, and two or three other

people, friends of theirs, lounging about and looking at the papers.

The mamma was a very handsome person of aristocratic appearance. The pretty daughter was practising the soprano part in a duet by Campana, which Barty knew well; it was "Una sera d'amore." The tenor had apparently not kept his appointment, and madame expressed some irritation at this; first to a friend, in French, but with a slight English accent—then in English to her daughter; and Barty grew interested.

After a little while, catching the mamma's eye (which was not difficult, as she very frankly and persistently gazed at him, and with a singularly tender and wistful expression of face), he got up and asked in English if he could be of any use—seeing that he knew the music well and had often sung it. The lady was delighted, and Barty and mademoiselle sang the duet in capital style to the mamma's accompaniment: "Guarda che bianca luna," &c.

"What a lovely voice you've got! May I ask your name?" says the mamma.

"Josselin."

"English, of course?"

"Upon my word I hardly know whether I'm English or French!" said Barty, and he and the lady fell into conversation.

It turned out that she was Irish, and married to a Belgian soldier, le Général Comte de Clèves (who was a tremendous swell, it seems—but just then in Brussels).

Barty told Madame de Clèves the story of his eye—he was always very communicative about his eye; and she suddenly buried her face in her hands and wept; and mademoiselle told him in a whisper that her eldest brother had gone blind and died three or four years ago, and that he was extraordinarily like Barty both in face and figure.

Presently another son of Madame de Clèves came in—an officer of dragoons in undress uniform, a splendid youth. He was the missing tenor, and made his excuses for being late, and sang very well indeed.

And Barty became the intimate friend of these good people, who made Blankenberghe a different place to him—and conceived for him a violent liking, and introduced him to all their smart Belgian friends; they were quite a set—bathing together, making music and dancing, taking excursions, and so forth. And before a fortnight was over Barty had become the most popular young man in the town, the gayest of the gay, the young guardsman once more, throwing dull care to the winds; and in spite of his impecuniosity (of which he made no secret whatever) the *boute-en-train* of the company. And this led to many droll adventures—of which I will tell one as a sample.

A certain Belgian viscount, who had a very pretty French wife, took a dislike to Barty. He had the reputation of being a tremendous fire-eater. His wife, a light-hearted little flirt (but not much harm in her), took a great fancy to him, on the contrary.

One day she asked him for a wax impression of the seal-ring he wore on his finger, and the following morning he sealed an empty envelope and stamped it with his ring, and handed it to her on the Plage. She snatched it with a quick gesture and slipped it into her pocket with quite a guilty little coquettish look of mutual understanding.

Monsieur Jean (as the viscount was called) noticed this, and jostled rudely against Josselin, who jostled back again and laughed.

Then the whole party walked off to the "tir," or shooting-gallery on the Plage; some wager was on, I believe, and when they got there, they all began to shoot—at different distances, ladies and gentlemen; all but Barty; it was a kind of handicap.

Monsieur Jean, after a fierce and significant look at Barty, slowly raised his pistol, took a deliberate aim at the small target, and fired—hitting it just half an inch over the bull's-eye; a capital shot. Barty couldn't have done better himself. Then taking another loaded pistol, he presented it to my friend by the butt and said, with a solemn bow:

"À vous, monsieur de la garde."

"Messieurs de la garde doivent toujours tirer les premiers!" said Barty, laughing; and carelessly let off his pistol in the direction of the target without even taking aim. A little bell rang, and there was a shout of applause; and Barty was conscious that by an extraordinary fluke he had hit the bull's-eye in the middle, and saw the situation at once.

Suddenly looking very grave and very sad, he threw the pistol away, and said—

"Je ne tire plus—j'ai trop peur d'avoir la main malheureuse un jour!" and smiled benignly at M. Jean.

A moment's silence fell on the party and M. Jean turned very pale.

Barty went up to Madame Jean:

"Will you forgive me for giving you with my seal an empty envelope? I could'nt think of anything pretty enough to write you—so I gave it up. Tear it and forgive me. I'll do better next time."

The lady blushed and pulled the letter out of her pocket and held it up to the light, and it was, as Barty said, merely an empty envelope and a red seal. She then held it out to her husband and exclaimed—

"Le cachet de Monsieur Josselin, que je lui avais demandé . . . !"

So bloodshed was perhaps avoided, and Monsieur Jean took care not to jostle Josselin any more. Indeed they became great friends.

For next day Barty strolled into the Salle d'Armes, Rue des Dunes—and there he found Monsieur Jean fencing with young de Clèves, the dragoon. Both were good fencers, but Barty was the finest fencer I ever met in my life, and always kept it up; and remembering his adventure of the previous day, it amused him to affect a careless nonchalance about such trivial things—"des enfantillages!"

"You take a turn with Jean, Josselin!" said the dragoon.

"Oh! I'm out of practice—and I've only got one eye. . . ."

"Je vous en prie, monsieur de la garde!" said the viscount.

"Cette fois, alors, nous allons tirer *ensemble*!" says Barty, and languidly dons the mask with an affected air, and makes a fuss about the glove not suiting him; and then, in spite of his defective sight, which seems to make no difference, he lightly and gracefully gives M. Jean such a dressing as that gentleman had never got in his life—not even from his maître d'armes: and afterwards to young



"À VOUS, MONSIEUR DE LA GARDE"

de Clèves the same. Well I knew his way of doing this kind of thing!

So Barty and M. and Madame Jean became quite intimate—and with his usual indiscretion Barty told them how he fluked that bull's eye, and they were charmed!

"Vous êtes impayable, savez-vous, mon cher!" says M. Jean—"vous avez tous les talents, et un million dans le gosier par-dessus le marché! Si jamais je puis vous être de service, savez-vous, comptez sur moi pour la vie. . . ." said the impulsive viscount when they bade each other good-bye at the end.

"Et plus jamais d'enveloppes vides, quand vous m'écrirez!" says madame.

So frivolous time wore on, and Barty found it pleasant to frivol in such pleasant company—very pleasant indeed! But when alone in his garret, with his seton-dressing and dry-cuppings, it was not so gay. He had to confess to himself that his eye was getting slowly worse instead of better; darkening day by day; and a little more retina had been taken in by the strange disease—"la peau de chagrin," as he nicknamed this wretched retina of his, after Balzac's famous story. He could still see with the left of it and at the bottom, but a veil had come over the middle and all the rest; by daylight he could see through this veil, but every object he saw was discoloured and distorted and deformed—it was worse than darkness itself; and this was so distressing, and so interfered with the sight of the other eye, that when the sun went down, the total darkness in the ruined portion of his left retina came as a positive relief. He took all this very desperately to heart and had very terrible forebodings. For he had never known an ache or a pain, and had innocently gloried all his life in the singular perfection of his five wits.

Then his money was coming to an end; he would soon have to sing in the streets, like Veronese, with Lady Archibald's guitar.

Dear Lady Archibald! When things went wrong with her she would always laugh, and say—

"Les misères du jour font le bonheur du lendemain!"

This he would say or sing to himself over and over again, and go to bed at night quite hopeful and sanguine after a merry day spent among his many friends; and soon sink into sleep, persuaded that his trouble was a bad dream which next morning would scatter and dispel. But when he woke, it was to find the grim reality sitting by his pillow, and he couldn't dry-cup it away. The very sunshine was an ache as he went out and got his breakfast with his blue spectacles on; and black care would link its bony arm in his as he listlessly strolled by the much-sounding sea—and cling to him close as he swam or dived; and he would wonder what he had ever done that so serious and tragic a calamity should have befallen so light a person as himself; who could only dance and sing and play the fool to make people laugh—Rigoletto—Triboulet—a mere grass-hopper, no ant or bee or spider, not even a third-class beetle—surely this was not according to the eternal fitness of things!

And thus in the unutterable utterness of his dejection he would make himself such evil cheer that he sickened with envy at the mere sight of any living thing that could see out of two eyes—a homeless irresponsible dog, a hunchback beggar, a crippled organ-grinder and his monkey—till he met some acquaintance; even but a rolling fisherman with a brown face and honest blue eyes—a pair of them—and then he would forget his sorrow and his envy in chat and jokes and laughter with him over each centime cigar; and was set up in good spirits for the day! Such was Barty Josselin, the most ready lover of his kind that ever existed, the slave of his last impression.

And thus he lived under the shadow of the sword of Damocles for

many months; on and off for years—indeed, as long as he lived at all. It is good discipline. It rids one of much superfluous self-complacency and puts a wholesome check on our keeping too good a conceit of ourselves; it prevents us from caring too meanly about mean things—too keenly about our own infinitesimal personalities; it makes us feel quick sympathy for those who live under a like condition: there are many such weapons dangling over the heads of us poor mortals by just a hair—a panoply, an armory, a very arsenal! And we grow to learn in time that when the hair gives way and the big thing falls, the blow is not half so bad as the fright had been, even if it kills us; and more often than not it is but the shadow, of the sword after all; a bogie that has kept us off many an evil track—perhaps even a blessing in disguise! And in the end, down comes some other sword, from somewhere else, and cuts for us the Gordian knot of our brief tangled existence, and solves the riddle and sets us free.

This is a world of surprises, where little ever happens but the unforeseen, which is seldom worth meeting halfway! And these moral reflections of mine are quite unnecessary and somewhat obvious, but they harm nobody, and are very soothing to make and utter at my time of life. Pity the sorrows of a poor old man, and forgive him his maudlin garrulity. . . .

One afternoon, lolling in deep dejection on the top of a little sandy hillock, "a dune," and plucking the long coarse grass, he saw a very tall elderly lady, accompanied by her maid, coming his way along the asphalt path that overlooked the sea—or rather, that prevented the sea from overlooking the land and overflowing it!

She was in deep black and wore a thick veil.

With a little jump of surprise he recognised his aunt Caroline—Lady Caroline Grey—of all his aunts the aunt who had loved him the best as a boy—whom he had loved the best.

She was a Roman Catholic, and very devout indeed—a widow, and childless now. And between her and Barty a coolness had fallen during the last few years—a heavy raw thick mist of cold estrangement; and all on account of his London life and the notoriety he had achieved there; things of which she disapproved entirely, and thought "unworthy of a gentleman"; and who can blame her for thinking so?

She had at first written to him long letters of remonstrance and good advice; which he gave up answering, after a while. And when they met in society, her manner had grown chill and distant and severe.

He hadn't seen or heard of his aunt Caroline for three or four years; but at the sudden sight of her a wave of tender childish remembrance swept over him, and his heart beat quite warmly to her: affliction is a solvent of many things, and first-cousin to forgiveness.

She passed without looking his way, and he jumped up and followed her, and said—

"O Aunt Caroline! won't you even speak to me?"

She started violently, and turned round, and cried—

"O Barty, Barty, where have you been all these years?" and seized both his hands, and shook all over.

"O Barty—my beloved little Barty—take me somewhere where we can sit down and talk. I've been thinking of you very much, Barty—I've lost my poor son—he died last Christmas! I was afraid you had forgotten my existence! I was thinking of you the very moment you spoke!"

The maid left them, and she took his arm and they found a seat.

She put up her veil and looked at him: there was a great likeness between them in spite of the difference of age. She had been his father's favourite sister (some ten years younger than Lord Runswick); and she was very handsome still, though about fifty-five.

"O Barty, my darling—how things have gone wrong between us! Is it *all* my doing? Oh, I hope not! . . ." And she kissed him.

"How like, how like! And you're getting a little black and bulgy under the eyes—especially the left one—and so did *he*, at just about your age! And how thin you are!"

"I don't think anything need ever go wrong between us again, Aunt Caroline. I am a very altered person, and a very unlucky one."

"Tell me, dear!"

And he told her all his story, from the fatal quarrel with her brother Lord Archibald—and the true history of that quarrel; and all that happened since: he had nothing to keep back.

She frequently wept a little, for truth was in every tone of his voice; and when it came to the story of his lost eye, she wept very much indeed. And his need of affection, of female affection especially, and of kinship, was so immense that he clung to this most kind and loving woman as if she'd been his mother come back from the grave, or his dear Lady Archibald.

This meeting made a great difference to Barty in many ways—made amends! Lady Caroline meant to pass the winter at Malines, of all places in the world. The Archbishop was her friend, and she was friends also with one or two priests at the seminary there. She was by no means rich, having but an annuity of not quite three hundred a year; and it soon became the dearest wish of her heart that Barty should live with her for a while, and be nursed by her if he wanted nursing; and she thought he did. Besides, it would be convenient on account of his doctor, M. Noiret, of the University of Louvain, which was near Malines—half an hour by train.

And Barty was only too glad; this warm old love and devotion had suddenly dropped on to him by some happy enchantment out of the skies at a moment of sore need. And it was with a passion of gratitude that he accepted his aunt's proposals.

He well knew, also, how it was in him to brighten her lonely life, almost every hour of it—and promised himself that she should not be a loser by her kindness to Mr. Nobody of Nowhere. He remembered

her love of fun, and pretty poetry, and little French songs, and droll chat—and nice cheerful meals *tête-à-tête*—and he was good at all these things. And how fond she was of reading out loud to him! The time might soon arrive when that would be a blessing indeed.

Indeed, a new interest had come into his life—not altogether a selfish interest either—but one well worth living for, though it was so unlike any interest that had ever filled his life before. He had been essentially a man's man hitherto, in spite of his gay light love for lovely women; a good comrade par excellence, a frolicsome chum, a rollicking boon-companion, a jolly pal! He wanted quite desperately to love something staid and feminine and gainly and well bred, whatever its age! some kind soft warm thing in petticoats and thin shoes, with no hair on its face, and a voice that wasn't male!



"I AM A VERY ALTERED PERSON"

Nor did her piety frighten him very much. He soon found that she was no longer the over-zealous proselytising busybody of the Cross—but immensely a woman of the world, making immense allowances. All roads lead to Rome (dit-on!), except a few which converge in the opposite direction; but even Roman roads lead to this wide tolerance in the end—for those of a rich warm nature who have been well battered by life; and Lady Caroline had been very thoroughly battered indeed: a bad husband—a bad son, her only child! both dead, but deeply loved and lamented; and in her heart of hearts there lurked a sad suspicion that her piety (so deep and earnest and sincere) had not bettered their badness—on the contrary,

perhaps! and had driven her Barty from her when he needed her most.

Now that his need of her was so great, greater than it had ever been before, she would take good care that no piety of hers should ever drive him away from her again; she felt almost penitent and apologetic for having done what she had known to be right—the woman in her had at last outgrown the nun.

She almost began to doubt whether she had not been led to selfishly overrate the paramount importance of the exclusive salvation of her own particular soul!

And then his frank, fresh look and manner, and honest boyish voice, so unmistakably sincere, and that mild and magnificent eye, so bright and humorous still, "so like—so like!" which couldn't even see her loving, anxious face. . . . Thank heaven, there was still one eye left that she could appeal to with her own!

And what a child he had been, poor dear—the very pearl of the Rohans! What Rohan of them all was ever a patch on this poor bastard of Antoinette Josselin's either for beauty, pluck, or mother-wit—or even for honour, if it came to that? Why, a quixotic scruple of honour had ruined him, and she was Rohan enough to understand what the temptation had been the other way; she had seen the beautiful lady!

And, pure as her own life had been, she was no puritan, but of a Church well versed in the deepest knowledge of our poor weak frail humanity; she has told me all about it, and I listened between the words.

So during the remainder of her stay at Blankenberghe he was very much with Lady Caroline, and rediscovered what a pleasant and lively companion she could be—especially at meals (she was fond of good food of a plain and wholesome kind, and took good care to get it).

She had her little narrownesses, to be sure, and was not hail-fellow-well-met with everybody, like him; and did not think very much of giddy little viscountesses with straddling loud-voiced Flemish husbands, nor of familiar facetious commercial millionnaires, of whom Barty numbered two or three among his adorers; nor even of the "highly-born" Irish wives of Belgian generals and all that. Madame de Clèves was an O'crien.

These were old ingrained Rohan prejudices, and she was too old herself to alter.

But she loved the good fishermen whose picturesque boats made such a charming group on the sands at sun-set, and also their wives and children; and here she and her nephew were "bien d'accord."

I fear her ladyship would not have appreciated very keenly the rising splendour of a certain not altogether unimportant modern house in Barge Yard, Bucklersbury—and here she would have been wrong. The time has come when we throw the handkerchief at female Rohans, we Maurices and our like. I have not done so myself, it is true; but not from any rooted antipathy to any daughter of a

hundred earls—nor yet from any particular diffidence on my own part.

Anyhow, Lady Caroline loved to hear all Barty had to say of his gay life among the beauty, rank, and fashion of Blankenberghe. She was very civil to the handsome Irish Madame de Clèves, *née* O'Brien, and listened politely to the family history of the O'Briens and that of the de Clèveses too; and learned, without indecent surprise, or any emotion of any kind whatever, what she had never heard before—namely, that in the early part of the twelfth century a Rohan de Whitby had married an O'Brien of Ballywrotte; and other prehistoric facts of equal probability and importance.

She didn't believe much in people's twelfth-century reminiscences; she didn't believe in those of her own family, who didn't believe in them either, or trouble about them in the least; and I dare say they were quite right.

Anyhow, when people solemnly talked about such things it made her rather sorry. But she bore up for Barty's sake, and the resigned, half-humorous courtesy with which she assented to these fables was really more humiliating to a sensitive, haughty soul than any mere supercilious disdain; not that she ever wished to humiliate, but she was easily bored, and thought that kind of conversation vulgar, futile, and rather grotesque.

Indeed, she grew quite fond of Madame de Clèves and the splendid young dragoon, and the sweet little black-haired daughter with lovely blue eyes, who sang so charmingly. For they were singularly charming people in every way, the de Clèveses; and that's a way Irish people often have—as well as being proud of their ancient blood. There is no more innocent weakness. I have it very strongly—*moi qui vous parle*—on the maternal side. My mother was a Blake of Derrydown, a fact that nobody would have known unless she now and then accidentally happened to mention it herself, or else my father did. And so I take the opportunity of slipping it in here—just out of filial piety!

So the late autumn of that year found Barty and his aunt at Malines, or Mechelen, as it calls itself in its native tongue.

They had comfortable lodgings of extraordinary cheapness in one of the dullest streets of that most picturesque but dead-alive little town, where the grass grew so thick between the paving-stones here and there that the brewer's dray-horses might have browsed in the "Grand Brul"—a magnificent but generally deserted thoroughfare leading from the railway station to the Place d'Armes, where rose still unfinished the colossal tower of one of the oldest and finest cathedrals in the world, whose chimes wafted themselves every half-quarter of an hour across the dreamy flats for miles and miles, according to the wind, that one might realise how slow was the flight of time in that particular part of King Leopold's dominions.

"And from a tall tower in the town
Death looks gigantically down!"

said Barty to his aunt—quoting (or misquoting) a bard they were

very fond of just then, as they slowly walked down the "Grand Bruil" in solitude together, from the nineteenth century to the fourteenth in less than twenty minutes—or three chimes from St. Rombault, or fifty shrieks from the railway station.

But for these a spirit of stillness and mediæval melancholy brooded over the quaint old city and great archi-episcopal see and most important railway station in all Belgium. Magnificent old houses in stone with wrought-iron balconies were to be had for rents that were almost nominal. From the tall windows of some of these a frugal, sleepy, priest-ridden old nobility looked down on broad and splendid streets hardly ever trodden by any feet but their own, or those of some stealthy Jesuit priest, or Sister of Mercy.

Only during the Kermesse, or at carnival-time, when noisy revellers of either sex and ungainly processions of tipsy masques and mummers waked Mechelen out of its long sleep, and all the town seemed one vast estaminet, did one feel one's self to be alive. Even at night, and in the small hours, frisky masques and dominoes walked the moonlit streets, and made loud old Flemish mediæval love, à la Teniers.

There was a beautiful botanical garden, through which a river flowed under tall trees, and turned the wheels of the oldest flour-mills in Flanders. This was a favourite resort of Barty's—and he had it pretty much to himself.

And for Lady Caroline there were, besides St. Rombault, quite half-a-dozen churches almost as magnificent if not so big, and in them as many as you could wish of old Flemish masters, beginning with Peter Paul Rubens, who pervades the land of his birth very much as Michael Angelo pervades Florence and Rome.

And these dim places of Catholic worship were generously open to all, every day and all day long, and never empty of worshippers, high and low, prostrate in the dust, or kneeling with their arms extended and their heads in the air, their wide-open, immovable, unblinking eyes hypnotised into stone by the cross and the crown of thorns. Mostly peasant women, these: with their black hoods falling from their shoulders, and stiff little close white caps that hid the hair.

Out of cool shadowy recesses of fretted stone and admirably-carved wood, emanations seemed to rise as from the long-forgotten past—tons of incense burnt hundreds of years ago, and millions of closely packed supplicants, rich and poor, following each other in *secula seculorum*! Lady Caroline spent many of her hours haunting these crypts—and praying there.

At the back of their house in the Rue des Ursulines Blanches, Barty's bedroom window overlooked the play-ground of the convent "des Sœurs Rédemptoristines"; all noble ladies, most beautifully dressed in scarlet and ultramarine, with long snowy veils, and who were waited upon by non-noble sisters in garments of a like hue but less expensive texture.

So at least said little Fenci Thorfs, the daughter of the house—little Frau, as Lady Caroline called her, and who seems to have been one of the best creatures in the world; she became warmly attached to both her lodgers, who reciprocated the feeling in full; it was her chief pleasure to wait on them and look after them at all times of the day, though Lady Caroline had already a devoted maid of her own.

Little Frau's father was a well-to-do burgher with a prosperous ironmongery in the "Petit Brul."

This was his private house, where he pursued his hobby, for he was an amateur photographer, very fond of photographing his kind and simple-minded old wife, who was always attired in rich Brussels silks and Mechelen lace on purpose. She even cooked in them, though not for her lodgers, whose midday and evening meals were sent from "La Cigogne," close by, in four large round tins that fitted into each other, and were carried in a wicker-work cylindrical basket. And it was little Frau's delight to descant on the qualities of the menu as she dished and served it. I will not attempt to do so.

But after little Frau had cleared it all away, Barty would descant on the qualities of certain English dishes he remembered, to the immense amusement of Aunt Caroline, who was reasonable fond of what is good to eat.

He would paint in words (he was better in words than any other medium—oil, water, or distemper) the boiled leg of mutton, not overdone; the mashed turnips; the mealy potato; the caper-sauce. He would imitate the action of the carver and the sound of the carving-knife making its first keen cut while the hot pink gravy runs down the sides. Then he would wordily paint a French roast chicken and its rich brown gravy and its watercresses; the *pommes sautées*; the crisp, curly *salade aux fines herbes*! And Lady Caroline, still hungry, would laugh till her eyes watered, as well as her mouth.

When it came to the sweets, the apple puddings and gooseberry-pies and Devonshire cream and brown sugar, there was no more laughing, for then Barty's talent soared to real genius—and genius is a serious thing. And as to his celery and Stilton cheese— But there! it's lunch-time, and I'm beginning to feel a little peckish myself. . . .

Every morning when it was fine Barty and his aunt would take an airing round the town, which was enclosed by a ditch where there was good skating in the winter, on long skates that went very fast, but couldn't cut figures, 8 or 3!

There were no fortifications or ramparts left. But a few of the magnificent old brick gateways still remained, admitting you to the most wonderful old streets with tall pointed houses—clean little slums, where women sat on their doorsteps making the most beautiful lace in the world—odd nooks and corners and narrow ways where it was easy to lose one's self, small as the town really was; innumerable little toy bridges over toy canals one could have leapt at a bound, overlooked by quaint irregular little dwellings, of colours that had once been as those of the rainbow, but which time had mellowed

into divine harmonies, as it does all it touches—from grand old masters to oak palings round English parks; from Venice to Mechelen and its lace; from a disappointed first love to a great sorrow.

Occasionally a certain distinguished old man of soldier-like aspect would pass them on horseback and gaze at their two tall British figures with a look of curious and benign interest, as if he mentally wished them well, and well away from this drear limbo of penitence and exile and expiation.

They learned that he was French, and a famous general, and that his name was Changarnier; and they understood that public virtue has to be atoned for.

And he somehow got into the habit of bowing to them with a good smile, and they would smile and bow back again. Beyond this they never exchanged a word, but this little outward show and ceremony of kindly look and sympathetic gesture always gave them a pleasant moment and helped to pass the morning.

All the people they met were to Lady Caroline like people in a dream: silent priests; velvet-footed nuns, who were much to her taste; quiet peasant women, in black cloaks and hoods, driving bullock-carts or carts drawn by dogs, six or eight of these inextricably harnessed together and panting for dear life; blue-bloused men in French caps, but bigger and blonder than Frenchmen, and less given to epigrammatic repartee, with mild, blue, beery eyes, *à fleur de tête*, and a look of health and solid amiability; sturdy green-coated little soldiers with cock-feathered brigand hats of shiny black, the brim turned up over the right eye and ear that they might the more conveniently take a good aim at the foe before he skedaddled at the mere sight of them; fat, comfortable burgesses and their wives, so like their ancestors who drink beer out of long glasses and smoke long clay pipes on the walls of the Louvre and the National Gallery that they seemed like old friends; and quaint old heavy children who didn't make much noise!

And whenever they spoke French to you, these good people, they said "savez-vous?" every other second; and whenever they spoke Flemish to each other it sounded so much like your own tongue, as it is spoken in the north of England, that you wondered why on earth you couldn't understand a single word.

Now and then, from under a hood, a handsome dark face with Spanish eyes would peer out—eloquent of the past history of the Low Countries, which Barty knew much better than I. But I believe there was once a Spanish invasion or occupation of some kind, and I dare say the fair Belgians are none the worse for it to-day. (It might even have been good for some of us, perhaps, if that ill-starred Armada hadn't come so entirely to grief. I'm fond of big tawny-black eyes.)

All this, so novel and so strange, was a perpetual feast for Lady Caroline. And they bought nice cheap, savoury things on the way home, to eke out the lunch from "La Cigogne."

In the afternoon Barty would take a solitary walk in the open

country, or along one of those endless straight *chaussées*, paved in the middle, and bordered by equidistant poplars on either side, and leading from town to town, and the monotonous perspective of which is so desolating to heart and eye; backwards or forwards, it is always the same, with a flat sameness of outlook to right and left, and every 450 seconds the chime would boom and flounder heavily by, with a dozen sharp railway whistles after it, like swordfish after a whale, piercing it through and through.

Barty evidently had all this in mind when he wrote the song of the seminarist in "Gleams," beginning—

"'Twas April, and the sky was clear,
An east wind blowing keenly;
The sun gave out but little cheer,
For all it shone serenely.
The wayside poplars, all arow,
For many a weary mile did throw
Down on the dusty flags below
Their shadows, picked out cleanly."
&c., &c., &c.

(Isn't it just like Barty to begin a lyric that will probably last as long as the English language with an innocent jingle worthy of a school-boy?)

After dinner, in the evening, it was Lady Caroline's delight to read aloud, while Barty smoked his cigarettes and inexpensive cigars—a concession on her part to make him happy, and keep him as much with her as she could; and she grew even to like the smell so much that once or twice, when he went to Antwerp for a couple of days to stay with Tescheles, she actually burned some of his tobacco on a red-hot shovel, for the scent of it seemed to spell his name for her and make his absence less complete.

Thus she read to him *Esmond*, *Hypatia*, *Never too Late to Mend*, *Les Maîtres Sonneurs*, *La Mare au Diable*, and other delightful books, English and French, which were sent once a week from a circulating library in Brussels. How they blessed thy name, good Baron Tauchnitz!

"O Aunt Caroline, if I could only illustrate books! If I could only illustrate *Esmond* and draw a passable Beatrix coming down the old staircase at Castlewood with her candle!" said Barty, one night.

That was not to be. Another was to illustrate *Esmond*, a poor devil who, oddly enough, was then living in the next street and suffering from a like disorder.¹

As a return, Barty would sing to her all he knew, in five languages—three of which neither of them quite understood—accompanying himself on the piano or guitar. Sometimes she would play for him accompaniments that were beyond his reach, for she was a decently-taught musician who could read fairly well at sight; whereas Barty

¹ ("Un malheureux, vêtu de noir,
Qui me ressemblait comme un frère . . ."—ED.)

didn't know a single note, and picked up everything by ear. She practised these accompaniments every afternoon, as assiduously as any school-girl.

Then they would sit up very late, as they always had so much to talk about—what had just been read or played or sung, and many other things: the present, the past, the future. All their old affection for each other had come back, trebled and quadrupled by pity on one side, gratitude on the other—and a little remorse on both. And there were long arrears to make up, and life was short and uncertain.

Sometimes l'Abbé Lefebvre, one of the professors at the séminaire and an old friend of Lady Caroline's, would come to drink tea, and talk politics, which ran high in Mechelen. He was a most accomplished and delightful Frenchman, who wrote poetry and adored Balzac—and even owned to a fondness for good old Paul de Kock, of whom it is said that when the news of his death reached Pius the Ninth, his Holiness dropped a tear and exclaimed—

"Mio caro Paolo di Kocco!"

Now and then the Abbé would bring with him a distinguished young priest, a Dominican—also a professor; Father Louis, of the princely house of Aremburg, who died a Cardinal three years ago.

Father Louis had an admirable and highly-cultivated musical gift, and played to them Beethoven and Mozart, Schubert, Chopin, and Schumann—and this music, as long as it lasted (and for some time after), was to Barty as great a source of consolation as of unspeakable delight; and therefore to his aunt also. Though I'm afraid she preferred any little French song of Barty's to all the Schumanns in the world.

First of all, the priest would play the "Moonlight Sonata," let us say; and Barty would lean back and listen with his eyes shut, and almost believe that Beethoven was talking to him like a father, and pointing out to him how small was the difference, really, between the greatest earthly joy and the greatest earthly sorrow: these were not like black and white, but merely different shades of grey, as on moonlit things a long way off! and Time, what a reconciler that was—like distance! and Death, what a perfect resolution of all possible discords, and how certain! and our own little life, how short, and without importance! what matters whether it's to-day, this small individual flutter of ours; or was a hundred years ago; or will be a hundred years hence! it has or had to be got through—and it's better past than to come.

"It all leads to the same divine issue, my poor friend," said Beethoven; "why, just see here—I'm stone-deaf, and can't hear a note of what I'm singing to you! But it is not about *that* I weep, when I am weeping. It was terrible when it first came on, my deafness, and I could no longer hear the shepherd's pipe or the song of the lark; but it's well worth going deaf, to hear all that I do. I have to write everything down, and read it to myself, and my tears fall on the ruled paper and blister the lines, and make the notes run into each other; and

when I try to blot it out, there's that still left on the page, which, turned into sound by good Father Louis the Dominican, will tell you, if you can only hear it aright, what is not to be told in any human speech; not even that of Plato, or Marcus Aurelius, or Erasmus, or Shakespeare; not even that of Christ himself, who speaks through me from his unknown grave, because I am deaf and cannot hear the distracting words of men—poor, paltry words at their best, which mean so many things at once that they mean just nothing at all. It's a tower of Babel. Just stop your ears and listen with your heart, and you will hear all that you can see when you shut your eyes or have lost them—and those are the only realities, mein armer Barty!"

Then the good Mozart would say—

"Lieber Barty—I'm so stupid about earthly things that I could never even say Boh to a goose, so I can't give you any good advice; all my heart overflowed into my brain when I was quite a little boy and made music for grown-up people to hear; from the day of my birth to my fifth birthday I had gone on remembering everything, but learning nothing new—remembering all that music!

"And I went on remembering more and more till I was thirty-five; and even then there was such a lot more of it where that came from that it tired me to try and remember so much—and I went back thither. And thither back shall you go too, Barty—when you are some thirty years older!

"And you already know from me how pleasant life is there—how sunny and genial and gay; and how graceful and innocent and amiable and well-bred the natives—and what beautiful prayers we sing, and what lovely gavottes and minuets we dance—and how tenderly we make love—and what funny tricks we play! and how handsome and well-dressed and kind we all are—and the likes of you, how welcome! Thirty years is soon over, Barty, Barty! Bel Mazetto! Ha, ha! good!"

Then says the good Schubert—

"I'm a loud, rollicking, beer-drinking Kerl, I am! Ich bin ein lustiger Student, mein Pardy; and full of droll practical jokes; worse than even you, when you were a young scapegrace in the Guards, and wrenched off knockers, and ran away with a poor policeman's hat! But I don't put my practical jokes into my music; if I did, I shouldn't be the poor devil I am! I'm very hungry when I go to bed, and when I wake up in the morning I have Katzenjammer (from an empty stomach) and a headache, and a heartache, and penitence and shame and remorse; and know there is nothing in this world or beyond it worth a moment's care but Love, Love, Love! Liebe, Liebe! The good love that knows neither concealment nor shame—from the love of the brave man for the pure maiden whom he weds, to the young nun's love of the Lord! and all the other good loves lie between these two, and are inside them, or come out of them, . . . and that's the love I put into my music. Indeed, my music is the

only love I know, since I am not beautiful to the eye, and can only care for tunes! . . .

"But you, Pardy, are handsome and gallant and gay, and have always been well beloved by man and woman and child, and always will be; and know how to love back again—even a dog! however blind you go, you will always have that, the loving heart—and as long as you can hear and sing, you will always have my tunes to fall back upon. . . ."

"And mine!" says Chopin. "If there's one thing sweeter than love, it's the sadness that it can't last; *she* loved me once—and now she loves *tout le monde*! and that's a sweet little melodic sadness of mine that will never fail you, as long as there's a piano within your reach, and a friend who knows how to play me on it for you to hear. You shall revel in my sadness till you forget your own. Oh, the sorrow of my sweet pipings! Whatever becomes of your eyes, keep your two ears for *my* sake; and for your sake too! You don't know what exquisite ears you've got. You are like me—you and I are made of silk, Barty—as other men are made of sackcloth; and their love, of ashes; and their joys, of dust!

"Even the good priest who plays me to you so glibly doesn't understand what I am talking about half so well as *you* do, who can't read a word I write! He had to learn my language note by note from the best music-master in Brussels. It's your mother tongue! You learned it as you sucked at your sweet young mother's breast, my poor love-child! And all through her, your ears, like your remaining eye, are worth a hatful of the common kind—and some day it will be the same with your heart and brain. . . ."

"Yes," continues Schumann, "but you'll have to suffer first—like me, who will have to kill myself very soon; because I'm going mad—and that's worse than any blindness! and like Beethoven who went deaf, poor demigod! and like all the rest of us who've been singing to you to-night; that's why our songs never pall—because we are acquainted with grief, and have good memories, and are quite sincere. The older you get, the more you will love us and our songs: other songs may come and go in the ear; but ours go ringing in the heart for ever!"

In some such fashion did the great masters of tune and tone discourse to Barty through Father Louis's well-trained finger-tips. They always discourse to you a little about yourself, these great masters, always; and always in a manner pleasing to your self-love! The finger-tips (whosoever's finger-tips they be) have only to be intelligent and well trained, and play just what's put before them in a true, reverent spirit. Anything beyond may be unpardonable impertinence, both to the great masters and yourself.

Musicians will tell you that all this is nonsense from beginning to end; you mustn't believe musicians about music, nor wine-merchants about wine—but vice versa!

When Father Louis got up from the music-stool, the Abbé would say to Barty, in his delightful, pure French—

"And now, mon ami—just for *me*, you know—a little song of autrefois."

"All right, M. l'Abbé—I will sing you the 'Adelaïde,' of Beethoven . . . if Father Louis will play for me."

"Oh, non, mon ami, do not throw away such beautiful organ as yours on such really beautiful music, which doesn't want it; it would be sinful waste; it's not so much the tune that I want to hear as the fresh young voice; sing me something French, something light, something amiable and droll; that I may forget the song, and only remember the singer."

"All right, M. l'Abbé," and Barty sings a delightful little song by Gustave Nadaud, called "Petit bonhomme vit encore."

And the good Abbé is in the seventh heaven, and quite forgets to forget the song.

And so, cakes and wine, and good-night—and M. l'Abbé goes humming all the way home. . . .

"Hé, quoi! pour des peccadilles
Gronder ces pauvres amours?
Les femmes sont si gentilles,
Et l'on n'aime pas toujours!
C'est bonhomme
Qu'on me nomme. . . .
Ma gaieté, c'est mon trésor!
Et bonhomme vit encor"—
Et bonhomme vit encor!"

An extraordinary susceptibility to musical sound was growing in Barty since his trouble had overtaken him, and with it an extraordinary sensitiveness to the troubles of other people, their partings and bereavements and wants, and aches and pains, even those of people he didn't know; and especially the woes of children, and dogs and cats and horses, and aged folk—and all the live things that have to be driven to market and killed for our eating—or shot at for our fun!

All his old loathing of sport had come back, and he was getting his old dislike of meat once more, and to sicken at the sight of a butcher's shop; and the sight of a blind man stirred him to the depths . . . even when he learned how happy a blind man can be!

These unhappy things that can't be helped pre-occupied him as if he had been twenty, thirty, fifty years older; and the world seemed to him a shocking place, a grey, bleak, melancholy hell where there was nothing but sadness, and badness, and madness.

And bit by bit, but very soon, all his trust in an all-merciful, all-powerful ruler of the universe fell from him! he shed it like an old skin; it sloughed itself away; and with it all his old conceit of himself as a very fine fellow, taller, handsomer, cleverer than anybody else, "bar two or three"! such darling beliefs are the best stays we can have; and he found life hard to face without them.

And he got as careful of his Aunt Caroline, and as anxious about her little fads and fancies and ailments, as if he'd been an old woman himself.

Imagine how she grew to dote on him!

And he quite lost his old liability to sudden freaks and fits of noisy fractiousness about trifles—when he would stamp and rave and curse and swear, and be quite pacified in a moment: "*Soupe-au-lait*," as he was nicknamed in Troplong's studio!

Besides his seton and his cuppings, dry and wet, and his blisters on his arms and back, and his mustard poultices on his feet and legs, and his doses of mercury and alteratives, he had also to deplete himself of blood three times a week by a dozen or twenty leeches behind his left ear and on his temple. All this softens and relaxes the heart towards others, as a good tonic will harden it.

So that he looked a mere shadow of his former self when I went over to spend my Christmas with him.

And his eye was getting worse instead of better; at night he couldn't sleep for the fireworks it let off in the dark. By day the trouble was even worse, as it so interfered with the sight of the other eye—even if he wore a patch, which he hated. He never knew peace but when his aunt was reading to him in the dimly-lighted room, and he forgot himself in listening.

Yet he was as lively and droll as ever, with a wan face as eloquent of grief as any face I ever saw; he had it in his head that the right eye would go the same way as the left. He could no longer see the satellites of Jupiter with it; hardly Jupiter itself, except as a luminous blur; indeed, it was getting quite near-sighted, and full of spots and specks and little movable clouds—*muscæ volitantes*, as I believe they are called by the Faculty. He was always on the look-out for new symptoms, and never in vain; and his burden was as much as he could bear.

He would half sincerely long for death, of which he yet had such a horror that he was often tempted to kill himself to get the bother of it well over at once. The idea of death *in the dark*, however remote—an idea that constantly haunted him as his own most probable end—so appalled him that it would stir the roots of his hair!

Lady Caroline confided to me her terrible anxiety, which she managed to hide from him. She herself had been to see M. Noiret, who was no longer so confident and cocksure about recovery.

I went to see him too, without letting Barty know. I did not like the man—he was stealthy in look and manner, and priestly and feline and sleek; but he seemed very intelligent, and managed to persuade me that no other treatment was even to be thought of.

I inquired about him in Brussels, and found his reputation was of the highest. What could I do? I knew nothing of such things! And what a responsibility for me to volunteer advice!

I could see my deep affection for Barty was a source of immense comfort to Lady Caroline, for whom I conceived a great and warm regard, besides being very much charmed with her.

She was one of those gentle, genial, kindly, intelligent women of the world, absolutely natural and sincere, in whom it is impossible not to confide and trust.

When I left off talking about Barty, because there was really nothing more to say, I fell into talking about myself: it was irresistible—she *made* one! I even showed her Leah's last photograph, and told her of my secret aspirations; and she was so warmly sympathetic, and said such beautiful things to me about Leah's face and aspect and all they promised of good, that I have never forgotten them, and never shall—they showed such a prophetic insight! they fanned a flame that needed no fanning, good heavens! and rang in my ears and my heart all the way to Barge Yard, Bucklersbury—while my eyes were full of Barty's figure as he again watched me depart by the *Baron Osy* from the Quai de la Place Verte in Antwerp; a sight that wrung me, when I remembered what a magnificent figure of youth he looked as he left the wharf at London Bridge on the Boulogne steamer, hardly more than two short years ago.

When I got back to London, after spending my Christmas holiday with Barty, I found the beginning of a little trouble of my own.

My father was abroad; my mother and sister were staying with some friends in Chiselhurst, and after having settled all business matters in Barge Yard I called at the Gibsons', in Tavistock Square, just after dusk. Mrs. Gibson and Leah were at home, and three or four young men were there also calling. There had been a party on Christmas eve.

I'm afraid I did not think much, as a rule, of the young men I met at the Gibsons'. They were mostly in business, like myself; and why I should have felt at all supercilious I can't quite see! But I did. Was it because I was very tall, and dressed by Barty's tailor in Jermyn Street? Was it because I knew French? Was it because I was a friend of Barty the Guardsman, who had never been supercilious towards anybody in his life? Or was it those maternally ancestral Irish Blakes of Derrydown stirring within me?

The simplest excuse I can make for myself is that I was a young snob, and couldn't help it. Many fellows are at that age. Some grow out of it, and some don't. And the Gibsons were by way of spoiling me, because I was Leah's bosom friend's brother, and I gave myself airs in consequence.

As I sat perfectly content, telling Leah all about poor Barty, another visitor was announced—a Mr. Scatcherd, whom I didn't know; but I saw at a glance that it would not do to be supercilious with Mr. Scatcherd. He was quite as tall as I, for one thing, if not taller. His tailor might have been Poole himself; and he was extremely good-looking, and had all the appearance and manners of a man of the

world. He might have been a Guardsman. He was not that, it seemed—only a barrister.

He had been at Eton, had taken his degree at Cambridge, and ignored me just as frankly as I ignored Tom, Dick, and Harry—whoever they were; and I didn't like it at all. He ignored everybody but Leah and her mamma: her papa was not there. It turned out that he was the only son of the great wholesale furrier in Ludgate Hill, the



ENTER MR. SCATCHERD

largest house of its kind in the world, with a branch in New York and another in Quebec or Montreal. He had been called to the bar to please a whim of his father's.

He had been at the Gibson party on Christmas-eve, and had paid Leah much attention there; and came to tell them that his mother hoped to call on Mrs. Gibson on the following day. I was savagely glad that he did not succeed in monopolising Leah; not even I could do that. She was kind to us all round, and never made any difference_s in her own house.

Mr. Scatcherd soon took his departure, and it was then I heard all about him.

There was no doubt that Mr. and Mrs. Gibson were immensely flattered by the civilities of this very important and somewhat consequential young man, and those of his mother, which were to follow; for within a week the Gibsons and Leah dined with Mr. and Mrs. Scatcherd in Portland Place.

On this occasion Mr. Gibson was, as usual, very funny, it seems. Whether his fun was appreciated I doubt, for he confided to me that Mr. Scatcherd, senior, was a pompous and stuck-up old ass. People have such different notions of what is funny. Nobody roared at Mr. Gibson's funniments more than I did; but he was Leah's papa.

"Let him joke his bellyful;
I'll bear it all for Sally!"

Young Scatcherd was fond of his joke too—a kind of supersubtly satirical Cambridgy banter that was not to my taste at all; for I am no Cantab, and the wit of the London Stock Exchange is subtle enough for me. His father did not joke. Indeed he was full of useful information, and only too fond of imparting it, and he always made use of the choicest language in doing so; and Mrs. Scatcherd was immensely genteel.

Young Scatcherd became the plague of my life. The worst of it is that he grew quite civil—seemed to take a liking. His hobby was to become a good French scholar, and he practised his French—which was uncommonly good of its English kind—on me. And I am bound to say that his manners were so agreeable (when he wasn't joking), and he was such a thoroughly good fellow, that it was impossible to snub him; besides, he wouldn't have cared if I had.

Once or twice he actually asked me to dine with him at his club, and I actually did; and actually he with me, at mine! And we spoke French all through dinner, and I taught him a lot of French school-boy slang, with which he was delighted. Then he came to see my mother and sister, who couldn't help being charmed with him. He was fond of the best music only (he had no ear whatever, and didn't know a note), and only cared for old pictures—the National Gallery, and all that; and read no novels but French—Balzac and Sand—and that only for practice; for he was a singularly pure young man, the purest in all Cambridge, and in those days I thought him a quite unforgivable prig.

So Scatcherd was in my thoughts all day and in my dreams all night—a kind of incubus; and my mother made herself very unhappy about him, on Leah's account and mine; except that now and then she would fancy it was Ida he was thinking of. And that would have pleased my mother very much; and me too!

His mother called on mine, who returned the call—but there was no invitation for us to dine in Portland Place.

Nothing of all this interrupted for a moment the bosom friendship

between my sister and Leah; nothing ever altered the genial sweetness of Leah's manners to me, nor indeed the cordiality of her parents: Mr. Gibson could not get on without that big guffaw of mine, at whatever he looked or said or did; no Scatcherd could laugh as loudly and readily as I! But I was very wretched indeed, and poured out my woes to Barty in long letters of poetical Blaze, and he would bid me hope and be of good cheer in his droll way; and a Blaze letter from him would hearten me up wonderfully—till I was told of Leah's going to the theatre with Mrs. Scatcherd and her son, or saw his horses and groom parading up and down Tavistock Square while he was at the Gibsons' or heard of his dining there without Ida or me!

Then one fine day in April (the first, I verily believe) young Scatcherd proposed to Leah—and was refused—unconditionally refused—to the deep distress and dismay of her father and mother, who had thoroughly set their hearts on this match; and no wonder!

But Leah was an obstinate young woman, it seems, and thoroughly knew her own mind, though she was so young—not seventeen.

Was I a happy man? Ah, wasn't I! I was sent to Bordeaux by my father that very week on business—and promised myself I would soon be quite as good a catch or match as Scatcherd himself. I found Bordeaux the sunniest, sweetest town I had ever been in—and the Bordelais the jolliest men on earth; and as for the beautiful Bordelaises—ma foi! they might have been monkeys, for me! There was but one woman among women—one lily among flowers—everything else was a weed.

Poor Scatcherd! when I met him, a few days later, he must have been struck by the sudden warmth of my friendship—the quick idiomatic cordiality of my French to him. This mutual friendship of ours lasted till his death in '88. And so did our mutual French!

Except Barty, I never loved a man better; two years after his refusal by Leah he married my sister—a happy marriage, though a childless one; and except myself, Barty never had a more devoted friend. And now to Barty I will return.

PART SIXTH

"From the east to western Ind,
No jewel is like Rosalind.
Her worth, being mounted on the wind,
Through all the world bears Rosalind.
All the pictures, fairest lined,
Are but black to Rosalind.
Let no fair be kept in mind,
But the fair of Rosalind.

Thus Rosalind of many parts
By heavenly synod was devised;
Of many faces, eyes, and hearts,
To have the touches dearest prized."
—As You Like It.

FOR many months Barty and his aunt lived their usual life in the Rue des Ursulines Blanches.

He always looked back on those dreary months as on a long nightmare. Spring, summer, autumn, and another Christmas!

His eye got worse and worse, and so interfered with the sight of the other that he had no peace till it was darkened wholly. He tried another doctor—Monsieur Goyers, professor at the liberal university of Ghent—who consulted with Dr. Noiret about him one day in Brussels, and afterwards told him that Noiret of Louvain, whom he described as a miserable Jesuit, was blinding him, and that he, this Goyers of Ghent, would cure him in six weeks.

"Mettez-vous au régime des viandes saignantes!" had said Noiret; and Barty had put himself on a diet of underdone beef and mutton.

"Mettez-vous au lait!" said Goyers—so he melted himself at the milk, as he called it—and put himself in Goyer's hands; and in six weeks got so much worse that he went back to Noiret and the regimen of the bleeding meats, which he loathed.

Then, in his long and wretched *désœuvrement*, his melancholia, he drifted into an indiscreet flirtation with a beautiful lady—he (as had happened before) being more the pursued than the pursuer. And so ardent was the pursuit that one fine morning the beautiful lady found herself gravely compromised—and there was a bother and a row.

"Amour, amour, quand tu nous tiens,
On peut bien dire 'Adieu Prudence!'"

All this gave Lady Caroline great distress, and ended most unhappily—in a duel with the lady's husband, who was a Colonel of Artillery, and meant business!

They fought with swords in a little wood near Laeken. Barty, who

could have run his fat antagonist through a dozen times during the five minutes they fought, allowed himself to be badly wounded in the side, just above the hip, and spent a month in bed. He had hoped to manage for himself a slighter wound and catch his adversary's point on his elbow.

Afterwards, Lady Caroline, who had disapproved of the flirtation, did not, strange to say, so disapprove of this bloody encounter, and thoroughly approved of the way Barty had let himself be pinked! and nursed him devotedly; no mother could have nursed him better—no sister—no wife! not even the wife of that Belgian Colonel of Artillery!

"Il s'est conduit en homme de cœur!" said the good Abbé.

"Il s'est conduit en bon gentilhomme!" said the aristocratic Father Louis, of the princely house of Aremberg.

On the other hand, young de Clèves the dragoon, and Monsieur Jean the Viscount, who had served as Barty's seconds (I was in America), were very angry with him for giving himself away in this "idiotically quixotic manner."

Besides which, Colonel Lecornu was a notorious bully, it seems; and a fool into the bargain; and belonged to a branch of the service they detested.

The only other thing worth mentioning is that Barty and Father Louis became great friends—almost inseparable during such hours as the Dominican could spare from the duties of his professorate.

It speaks volumes for all that was good in each of them that this should have been so, since they were wide apart as the poles in questions of immense moment: questions on which I will not enlarge, strongly as I feel about them myself—for this is not a novel, but a biography, and therefore no fit place for the airing of one's own opinion on matters so grave and important.

When they parted they constantly wrote to each other—an intimate correspondence that was only ended by the Father's death.

Barty also made one or two other friends in Malines, and was often in Antwerp and Brussels, but seldom for more than a few hours, as he did not like to leave his aunt alone.

One day came, in April, on which she had to leave him.

A message arrived that her father, the old Marquis (Barty's grandfather), was at the point of death. He was ninety-six. He had expressed a wish to see her once more, although he had long been childish.

So Barty saw her off, with her maid, by the *Baron Osy*. She promised to be back as soon as all was over. Even this short parting was a pain—they had grown so indispensable to each other.

Tescheles was away from Antwerp, and the disconsolate Barty went back to Malines and dined by himself; and little Frau waited on him with extra care.

It turned out that her mother had cooked for him a special dish of consolation—sausage-meat stewed inside a red cabbage, with apples

and cloves, till it all gets mixed up. It is a dish nor to be eaten when you are young and Flemish, and hungry and happy and well (even then you mustn't take more than one helping). When you are not all this, it is good to wash it down with half a bottle of the best Burgundy—and this Barty did (from Vougeot-Conti & Co.).

Then he went out and wandered about in the dark, and lost himself in a dreamy dædalus of little streets and bridges and canals and



SO NEAR AND YET SO FAR

ditches. A huge comet (Encke's, I believe) was flaring all over the sky.

He suddenly came across the lighted window of a small estaminet, and went in.

It was a little beer-shop of the humblest kind—and just started. At a little deal table, brand-new, a middle-aged burgher of prosperous appearance was sitting next to the barmaid, who had deserted her post at the bar—and to whom he seemed somewhat attentive; for their chairs were close together, and their arms round each other's waists, and they drank out of the same glass.

There was no one else in the room, and Barty was about to make himself scarce, but they pressed him to come in; so he sat at another

little new deal table on a little new straw-bottomed chair, and she brought him a glass of beer. She was a very handsome girl, with a tall, graceful figure, and Spanish eyes. He lit a cigar, and she went back to her beau quite simply—and they all three fell into conversation about an operetta by Victor Massé, which had been performed in Malines the previous night, called *Les Noces de Jeannette*.

The barmaid and her monsieur were trying to remember the beautiful air Jeannette sings as she mends her angry husband's breeches:

"Cours, mon aiguille, dans la laine!
Ne te casse pas dans ma main;
Avec de bons baisers demain
Jean nous paiera de notre peine!"

So Barty sang it to them; and so beautifully that they were all but melted to tears—especially the monsieur, who was evidently very sentimental and very much in love. Besides, there was that ineffable charm of the pure French intonation, so caressing to the Belgian ear, so dear to the Belgian soul, so unattainable by Flemish lips. It was one of Barty's most successful ditties—and if I were a middle-aged burgher of Mechelen, I shouldn't much like to have a young French Barty singing "Cours, mon aiguille" to the girl of my heart.

Then, at their desire, he went on singing things till it was time to leave, and found he had spent quite a happy evening; nothing gave him greater pleasure than singing to people who liked it—and he went singing on his way home, dreamily staring at the rare gas-lamps and the huge comet, and thinking of his old grand-father who lay dying or dead: "Cours, mon aiguille, it is good to live—it is good to die!"

Suddenly he discovered that when he looked at one lamp, another lamp close to it on the right was completely eclipsed—and he soon found that a portion of his right eye, not far from the centre, was totally sightless.

The shock was so great that he had to lean against a buttress of St. Rombault for support.

When he got home he tested the sight of his eye with a two-franc piece on the green table-cloth, and found there was no mistake—a portion of his remaining eye was stone blind.

He spent a miserable night, and went next day to Louvain, to see the oculist.

M. Noiret heard his story, arranged the dark room and the lamp, dilated the right pupil with atropine, and made a minute examination with the ophthalmoscope.

Then he became very thoughtful, and led the way to his library and begged Barty to sit down; and began to talk to him very seriously indeed, like a father—patting the while a small Italian greyhound that lay and shivered and whined in a little round cot by the fire.

M. Noiret began by inquiring into his circumstances, which were not flourishing, as we know—and Barty made no secret of them; then he asked him if he were fond of music, and was pleased to hear

that he was, since it is such an immense resource; then he asked him if he belonged to the Roman Catholic faith, and again was pleased.

"For"—said he—"you will need all your courage and all your religion to hear and bear what it is my misfortune to have to tell you. I hope you will have more fortitude than another young patient of mine (also an artist) to whom I was obliged to make a similar communication. He blew out his brains on my door-step!"

"I promise you I will not do that. I suppose I am going blind?"

"Hélas! mon jeune ami! I grieve to say that the fatal disease, congestion and detachment of the retina, which has so obstinately and irrevocably destroyed your left eye, has begun its terrible work on the right. We will fight for every inch of the way. But I fear I must not give you any hope, after the careful examination I have just made. It is my duty to be frank with you."

Then he said much about the will of God, and where true comfort was to be found, at the foot of the Cross; in fact, he said all he ought to have said according to his lights, as he fondled his little greyhound—and finally took Barty to the door, which he opened for him, most politely bowing with his little velvet skull-cap; and pocketed his full fee (ten francs) with his usual grace of careless indifference, and gently shut the door on him. There was nothing else to do.

Barty stood there for some time, quite dazed; partly because his pupil was so dilated he could hardly see—partly (he thinks) because he in some way became unconscious; although when he woke from this little seeming trance, which may have lasted for more than a minute, he found himself still standing upright on his legs. What woke him was the *sudden consciousness of the north*, which he hadn't felt for many years; and this gave him extraordinary confidence in himself, and such a wholesome sense of power and courage that he quickly recovered his wits; and when the glad surprise of this had worn itself away he was able to think and realise the terrible thing that had happened. He was almost pleased that his Aunt Caroline was away. He felt he could not have faced her with such news—it was a thing easier to write and prepare her for than to tell her by word of mouth.

He walked about Louvain for several hours, to tire himself. Then he went to Brussels and dined, and again walked about the lamp-lit streets and up and down the station, and finally went back to Malines by a late train—very nervous—expecting that the retina of his right eye would suddenly go pop—yet hugging himself all the while in his renewed old comfortable feeling of companionship with the north pole, that made him feel like a boy again; that inexplicable sensation so intimately associated with all the best reminiscences of his innocent and happy childhood.

He had been talking to himself like a father all day, though not in the same strain as M. Noiret; and had almost arrived at framing the programme of a possible existence—singing at cafés with his guitar—singing anywhere: he felt sure of a living for himself, and for the

little boy who would have to lead him about—if the worst came to the worst.

If but the feeling of self-orientation which was so necessary to him could only be depended upon, he felt that in time he would have pluck enough to bear anything. Indeed, total eclipse was less appalling, in its finality, than that miserable sword of Damocles which had been hanging over him for months—robbing him of his manhood—poisoning all the springs of life.



"HÉLAS! MON JEUNE AMI...."

Why not make a lifelong endurance of evil, a study, a hobby, and a pride; and be patient as bronze or marble, and ever wear an invincible smile at grief, even when in darkness and alone? Why not indeed!

And he set himself then and there to smile invincibly, meaning to keep smiling for fifty years at least—the blind live long.

So he chatted to himself, saying, *Sursum cor! sursum corda!*¹ all the way home; and walking down the Grand Brul, he had a little adventure which absolutely gave him a hearty guffaw and sent him almost laughing to bed.

There was a noisy squabble among some soldiers and civilians on the opposite side of the way, and a group of men in blouses were looking on. Barty stood leaning against a lamp-post, and looked on too.

Suddenly a small soldier rushed at the blouses, brandishing his short straight sword (or *coupe-choux*, as it is called in civilian slang), and saying:

"Ça ne vous regarde pas, savez-vous! allez-vous en bien vite, ou je vous . . ."

The blouses fled like sheep.

Then as he caught sight of Barty he reached at him.

"Ça ne vous regarde pas, savez-vous! . . ." (It doesn't concern you.)

"Non—c'est moi qui regarde, savez-vous!" said Barty.

"Qu' est-ce que vous regardez?"

"Je regarde la lune et les étoiles. Je regarde la comète!"

"Voulez-vous bien vous en aller bien vite?"

"Une autre fois!" says Barty.

"Allez-vous en, je vous dis!"

"Après-demain!"

"Vous . . . ne . . . voulez . . . pas . . . vous . . . en . . . aller?" says the soldier, on tiptoe, his chest against Barty's stomach, his nose almost up to Barty's chin, glaring up like a fiend and poisoning his *coupe-choux* for a death-stroke.

"Non, sacré petit poissee-cailloux du diable!" roars Barty.

"Eh bien, restez où vous êtes!" and the little man plunged back into the fray on the opposite side—and no blood was shed after all.

Barty dreamt of this adventure, and woke up laughing at it in the small hours of the night. Then suddenly, in the dark, he remembered the horror of what had happened. It overwhelmed him. He realised, as in a sudden illuminating flash, what life meant for him henceforward—life that might last for so many years.

Vitality is at its lowest ebb at that time of night; though the brain is quick to perceive, and so clear that its logic seems inexorable.

It was hell. It was not to be borne a moment longer. It must be put an end to at once. He tried to feel the north, but could not. He would kill himself then and there, while his aunt was away; so that the horror of the sight of him, after, should at least be spared her.

He jumped out of bed and struck a light. Thank Heaven, he wasn't blind yet, though he saw all the bogies, as he called them, that had made his life a burden to him for the last two years—the retina floating loose about his left eye, tumbling and deforming every lighted thing it reflected—and also the new dark spot in his right.

He partially dressed, and stole upstairs to old Torfs's photographic studio. He knew where he could find a bottle full of cyanide of potassium, used for removing finger-stains left by silver nitrate; there was enough of it to poison a whole regiment. That was better than taking a header off the roof. He seized a handful of the stuff, and came down and put it into a tumbler by his bedside and poured some water over it.

Then he got his writing case and a pen and ink, and jumped into

bed; and there he wrote four letters: one to Lady Caroline, one to Father Louis, one to Lord Archibald, and one to me in Blaze.

The cyanide was slow in melting. He crushed it angrily in the glass with his penholder—and the scent of bitter-almonds filled the room. Just then the sense of the north came back to him in full; but it only strengthened his resolve and made him all the calmer.

He lay staring at the tumbler, watching little bubbles, revelling in what remained of his exquisite faculty of minute sight—with a feeling of great peace; and thought prayerfully; lost himself in a kind of formless prayer without words—lost himself completely. It was as if the wished-for dissolution were coming of its own accord; Nirvana—an ecstasy of conscious annihilation—the blessed end, the end of all! as though he were passing

“. . . du sommeil au songe—
Du songe à la mort.”

It was not so. . . .

He was aroused by a knock at the door, which was locked. It was broad daylight.

“Il est dix heures, savez-vous?” said little Frau outside—“voulez-vous votre café dans votre chambre?”

“O Christ!” said Barty—and jumped out of bed. “It’s all got to be done now!”

But something very strange had happened.

The tumbler was still there, but the cyanide had disappeared; so had the four letters he had written. His pen and ink were on the table, and on his open writing-case lay a letter in Blaze—in his own handwriting. The north was strong in him. He called out to Finche Torfs to leave his coffee in the drawing-room, and read his Blaze letter—and this is what he read:

“MY DEAR BARTY,—Don’t be in the least alarmed on reading this hasty scrawl, after waking from the sleep you meant to sleep for ever. There is no sleep without a live body to sleep in—no such thing as everlasting sleep. Self-destruction seems a very simple thing—more often a duty than not; but it’s not to be done! It is quite impossible not to be, when once you’ve been.

“If I were to let you destroy your body, as you were so bent on doing, the strongest interest I have on earth would cease to exist.

“I love you, Barty, with a love passing the love of woman; and have done so from the day you were born. I loved your father and mother before you—and theirs; ça date de loin, mon pauvre ami! and especially I love your splendid body and all that belongs to it—brain, stomach, heart and the rest; even your poor remaining eye, which is worth all the eyes of Argus!

“So I have used your own pen and ink and paper, your own right hand and brain, your own cipher, and the words that are yours, to

write you this—in English. I like English better than French.

"Listen. Monsieur Noiret is a fool; and you are a poor self-deluded hypochondriac.

"I am convinced your right eye is safe for many years to come—probably for the rest of your life.

"You have quite deceived yourself in fancying that the symptom you perceived in your right eye threatens the disease which has destroyed your left—for the sight of that alas! is irretrievably gone; so don't trouble about it any more. It will always be charming to *look at*, but it will never *see* again. Some day I will tell you how you came to lose the use of it. I think I know.

"M. Noiret is new to the ophthalmoscope. The old humbug never saw your right retina at all—nor your left one either, for that matter. He only pretended, and judged entirely by what you told him; and you didn't tell him very clearly. He's a Belgian, you know, and a priest, and doesn't think very quick.

"I saw your retina, although but with *his* eye. There is no sign of congestion or coming detachment whatever. That blind portion you discovered is in *every* eye. It is called the '*punctum cæcum*.' It is where the optic nerve enters the retina and spreads out. It is only with one eye shut that an ordinary person can find it, for each eye supplements this defect on the other. To-morrow morning try the experiment on little Finche Torfs; on any one you meet. You will find it in everybody.

"So don't trouble about either eye any more. I'm not infallible, of course; it's *your* brain I'm using now. But your brain is infinitely better than that of poor M. Noiret, who doesn't know what his eye really perceives, and takes it for something else! Your brain is the best brain I know, although you are not aware of this, and have never even used it, except for trash and nonsense. But you *shall*—some day. *I'll* take care of that, and the world shall wonder.

"Trust me. Live on, and I will never desert you again, unless you again force me by your conduct. I have come back to you in the hour of your need.

"I have managed to make you, in your sleep, throw away your poison where it will injure nobody but the rats, and no one will be a bit the wiser. I have made you burn your touching letters of farewell; you will find the ashes in the stove. Yours is a good heart!

"Now take a cold bath and have a good breakfast, and go to Antwerp or Brussels and see people and amuse yourself.

"Never see M. Noiret again. But when your aunt comes back you must both clear out of this depressing priestly hole; it doesn't suit either of you, body or mind. Go to Düsseldorf, in Prussia. Close by, at a village called Riffraath, lives an old doctor, Dr. Hasenclever, who understands a deal about the human heart and something about the human body; and even a little about the human eye, for he is a famous oculist. He can't cure, but he'll give you things that at least will do you no harm. He won't rid you of the eye that remains!

You will meet some pleasant English people, whom I particularly wish you to meet, and make friends, and have a holiday from trouble, and begin the world anew.

"As to who *I* am, you shall know in time. My power to help you is very limited, but my devotion to you (for very good reasons) has no limits at all.

"Take it that my name is Martia. When you have finished reading this letter look at yourself in your looking-glass and say (loud enough for your own ears to hear you)—

"*'I trust you, Martia!'*

"Then I will leave you for a while, and come back at night, as in the old days. Whenever the north is in you, there am I; seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, feeling with your five splendid wits by day—sleeping your lovely sleep at night; but only able to think with *your* brain, it seems, and then only when you're fast asleep. I only found it out just now, and saved your earth ly life, mon beau somnambule! It was a great surprise to me!

"Don't mention this to any living soul till I give you leave. You will only hear from me on great occasions.

"MARTIA."

"P.S.—Always leave something to write with by your bedside at night, in case the great occasion should arise. *On ne sait pas ce qui peut arriver!*"

Bewildered, beside himself, Barty ran to his looking-glass, and stared himself out of countenance, and almost shouted—

"*'I trust you, Martia!'*

And ceased suddenly to feel the north.

Then he dressed and went to breakfast. Little Frau thought he had gone mad, for he put a five franc piece upon the carpet, and made her stand a few feet off from it and cover her left eye with her hand.

"Now follow the point of my stick with your right eye," says he, "and tell me if the five-franc piece disappears."

And he slowly drew with the point of his stick an imaginary line from the five-franc piece to the left of her, at right angles to where she stood. When the point of the stick was about two feet from the coin, she said—

"*Tiens, tiens, I no longer see the piece!*"

When the point of the stick had got a foot farther on, she said, "Now I can see the piece again quite plain."

Then he tried the same experiment on her left eye, rightwards, with the same result. Then he experimented with equal success on her father and mother, and found that every eye at No. 36 Rue des Ursulines Blanches had exactly the same blind spot as his own.

Thenn off he went to Antwerp to see his friends with a light heart—the first light heart he had known for many months; but when he got

there he was so pre-occupied with what had happened that he did not care to see anybody.

He walked about the ramparts and along the Scheldt, and read and re-read that extraordinary letter.

Who and what could Martia be?

The reminiscence of some antenatal incarnation of his own soul? the soul of some ancestor or ancestress—of his mother, perhaps? or, perhaps, some occult portion of himself—of his own brain in unconscious cerebration during sleep?

As a child and a small boy, and even as a very young man, he had often dreamt at night of a strange, dim land by the sea, a land unlike any land he had ever beheld with the waking eye, where beautiful aquatic people, mermen and mermaids and charming little mer-children (of which he was one) lived an amphibious life by day, diving and sporting in the waves.

Splendid caverns, decorated with precious stones, and hung with soft moss, and shining with a strange light; heavenly music, sweet, affectionate carresses—and then total darkness; and yet one knew who and what and where everything and everybody was by some keener sense than that of sight.

It all seemed strange and delightful, but so vague and shadowy it was impossible to remember anything clearly; but ever pervading all things was that feeling of the north which had always been such a comfort to him.

Was this extraordinary letter the result of some such forgotten dream he may have had during the previous night, and which may have prompted him to write it in his sleep? some internal knowledge of the anatomy of his own eye which was denied to him when awake?

Anyhow, it was evidently true about that blind spot on the retina (the *punctum cæcum*), and that he had been frightening himself out of his wits for nothing, and that his right eye was really sound; and, all through this wondrous yet simple revelation, it was time this old hysterical mock-disease should die.

Once more life was full of hopes and possibilities, and with such inarticulate and mysterious promptings as he often felt within his soul, and such a hidden gift to guide them, what might he not one day develop into?

Then he went and found Tescheles, and they dined together with a famous pianist, Louis Brassin, and afterwards there was music, and Barty felt the north, and his bliss was transcendent as he went back to Malines by the last train—talking to Martia (as he expressed it to himself) in a confidential whisper which he made audible to his own ear (that she, if it was a she, might hear too): almost praying, in a fervour of hope and gratitude; and begging for further guidance; and he went warmly to bed, hugging close within himself, somewhere about the region of the diaphragm, an ineffable imaginary something which he felt to be more precious than any possession that had ever yet

been his—more precious even than the apple of his remaining eye; and when he awoke next morning he felt he had been most blissfully dreaming all night long, but could not remember anything of his dreams, and on a piece of paper he had left by his bedside was written in pencil, in his own Blaze—

“You must depend upon yourself, Barty, not on me. Follow your own instincts when you feel you can do so without self-reproach, and all will be well with you.—M.”

His instincts led him to spend the day in Brussels, and he followed them; he still wanted to walk about and muse and ponder, and Brussels is a very nice, gay, and civilised city for such a purpose—a little Paris, with charming streets and shops and a charming arcade, and very good places to eat and drink in, and hear pretty music.

He did all this, and spent a happy day.

He came to the conclusion that the only way to keenly appreciate and thoroughly enjoy the priceless gift of sight in one eye was to lose that of the other; in the kingdom of the blind the one-eyed is king, and he fully revelled in the royalty that was now his, he hoped, for evermore; but wished for himself as limited a kingdom and as few subjects as possible.

Then back to Malines by the last train—and the sensation of the north, and a good-night; but no message in the morning—no message from Martia for many mornings to come.

He received, however, a long letter from Lady Caroline.

The old Marquis had died without pain, and with nearly all his family round him; but perfectly childish, as he had been for two or three years. He was to be buried on the following Monday.

Barty wrote a long letter in reply, telling his aunt how much better he had suddenly become in health and spirits; how he had thought of things, and quite reconciled himself at last to the loss of his left eye, and meant to keep the other and make the best of it he could; how he had heard of a certain Doctor Hasenclever, a famous oculist near Düsseldorf, and would like to consult him; how Düsseldorf was such a healthy town, charming and gay, full of painters and soldiers, the best and nicest people in the world—and also very cheap. Mightn't they try it?

He was very anxious indeed to go back to his painting, and Düsseldorf was as good a school as any, &c., &c., &c. He wrote pages—of the kind he knew she would like, for it was of the kind he liked writing to her; they understood each other thoroughly, he and Lady Caroline, and well he knew that she could only be quite happy in doing whatever he had most at heart.

How he longed to tell her everything! but that must not be. I can imagine all the deep discomfort to poor Barty of having to be discreet for the first time in his life, of having to keep a secret—and from his beloved Aunt Caroline of all people in the world!

That was a happy week he spent—mostly in Antwerp among the painters. He got no more letters from Martia, nor for many days to come; but he felt the north every night as he sank into a healthy sleep, and he woke in the morning full of hope and confidence in himself—at last *sans peur et sans reproche*.

One day in Brussels he met M. Noiret, who actually put on a very grave face; they shook hands, and Barty inquired affectionately after the little Italian greyhound, and asked what was French for "*punctum cæcum*."

Said Noiret: "*Ça s'appelle le point caché—c'est une portion de la rétine avec laquelle on ne peut pas voir. . .*"

Barty laughed and shook hands again, and left the Professor staring.

Then he was a great deal with Father Louis. They went to Ghent together, and other places of interest, and to concerts in Brussels.

The good Dominican was very sorrowful at the prospect of soon losing his friend. Poor Barty! The trial it was to him not to reveal his secret to this singularly kind and sympathetic comrade; not even under the seal of confession! So he did not confess at all; although he would have confessed anything to Father Louis, even if Father Louis had not been a priest. There are the high Catholics, who understand the souls of others, and all the difficulties of the conscience, and do not proselytise in a hurry; and the low Catholics, the converts of the day before yesterday, who will not let a body be!

Father Louis was a very high Catholic indeed.

The Lady Caroline Grey, 12A Seamore Place, London, to M. Josselin, 36 Rue des Ursulines Blanches, Malines:

"MY DEAR LITTLE BARTY,—Your nice long letter made me very happy—happy beyond description; it makes me almost jealous to think that you should have suddenly got so much better in your health and spirits while I was away; you won't want me any more! That doesn't prevent my longing to get back to you. You must put up with your poor old aunty for a little while yet.

"And now for *my* news—I couldn't write before. Poor papa was buried on Monday, and we all came back here next day. He has left you £200: *c'est toujours ça!* Everything seems in a great mess. Your Uncle Runswick¹ is going to be very poor indeed; he is going to let Castle Rohan, and live here all the year round. Poor fellow, he looks as old as his father did ten years ago, and he's only sixty-three! If Algy could only make a good marriage! At forty that's easier said than done.

"Archibald and his wife are at a place called Monte Carlo, where there are gaming-tables: she gambles fearfully it seems; and they lead a cat-and-dog life. She is *plus que coquette*, and extravagant to a degree; and he is quite shrunk and prematurely old, and almost shabby, and drinks more brandy than he ought.

¹ The new Marquis of Whitby.

"Daphne is charming, and is to come out next spring; she will have £3000 a year, lucky child; all out of chocolate. What nonsense we've all talked about trade! we shall all have to take to it in time. The Lonlay-Savignac people were wise in their generation.

"And what do you think? Young Digby-Dobbs wants to marry her, out of the school-room! He'll be Lord Frogal, you know; and very soon, for his father is drinking himself to death.

"He's in your old regiment, and a great favourite; not yet twenty—he only left Eton last Christmas twelvemonth. She says she won't have him at any price, because he stammers.

"She declares you haven't written to her for three months, and that you owe her an illustrated letter in French, with priests and nuns, and dogs harnessed to a cart.

"And now for news that will delight you: She is to come abroad with me for a twelvemonth, and wishes to go with you and me to Düsseldorf first! *Isn't* that a happy coincidence? We would all spend the summer there, and then Italy for the winter; you too, if you can (so you must be economical with that £200).

"I have already heard wonders about Dr. Hasenclever, even before your letter came; he cured General Baines, who was given up by everybody here, Lady Palmerston told me; she was here yesterday, by-the-bye, and the Duchess of Bermondsey, and both inquired most kindly after you.

"The Duchess looked as handsome as ever, and as proud as a peacock; for last year she presented her niece, Julia Royce, 'the divine Julia,' the greatest beauty ever seen, I am told—with many thousands a year, if you please—Lady Jane Royce's daughter, an only child, and her father's dead. She's six feet high, so you would go mad about her. She's already refused sixty offers, good ones; among them little Lord Orrisroot, the hunchback, who'll have £1000 a day (including Sundays) when he comes into the title—and that can't be very far off, for the wicked old Duke of Deptford has got creeping paralysis, like his father and grandfather before him, and is now quite mad, and thinks himself a postman, and rat-tats all day long on the furniture. Lady Jane is furious with her for not accepting; and when Julia told her, she slapped her face before the maid!

"There's another gigantic beauty that people have gone mad about—a Polish pianist, who's just married young Harcourt, who's a grandson of that old scamp the Duke of Towers.

"Talking of beauties, whom do you think I met yesterday in the Park? Whom but your stalwart friend Mr. Maurice (*he wasn't* the beauty), with his sister, your old Paris playfellow, and the lovely Miss Gibson! He introduced them both, and I was delighted with them, and we walked together by the Serpentine; and after five minutes I came to the conclusion that Miss Gibson is as beautiful as it is possible for a dark beauty to be, and as nice as she looks. She isn't dark really, only her eyes and hair; her complexion is like

cream: she's a freak of nature. Lucky young Maurice if she is to be his fate—and both well off, I suppose.

"Upon my word, if you were King Cophetua and she the beggar-maid, I would give you both my blessing. But how is it you never fell in love with the fair *Ida*? You never told me how handsome she is. She too complained of you as a correspondent, and declares that she gets one letter in return for three she writes you.

"I have bought you some pretty new songs, among others one by Charles Kingsley, which is lovely; about three fishermen and their wives: it reminds one of our dear Whitby! I can play the accompaniment in perfection, and all by heart!

"Give my kindest remembrances to Father Louis and the dear Abbé Lefebvre, and say kind things from me to the Torfses. Martha sends her love to little Frau, and so do I.

"We hope to be in Antwerp in a fortnight, and shall put up at the Grand Laboureur. I shall go to Malines, of course, to say good-bye to people.

"Tell the Torfses to get my things ready for moving. There will be five of us: I and Martha, and Daphne and two servants of her own; for Daphne's got to take old Mrs. Richards, who won't be parted from her.

"Good-bye for the present. My dear boy, I thank God on my knees night and morning for having given you back to me in my old age.—Your ever affectionate aunt,

CAROLINE."

"P.S.—You remember pretty little Kitty Hardwicke you used to flirt with, who married young St. Clair, who's now Lord Kidderminster? She's just had three at a birth; she had twins only last year; the Queen's delighted. Pray be careful about never getting wet feet——"

One stormy evening in May, Mrs. Gibson drove *Ida* and *Leah* and me and Mr. Babbage, a middle-aged but very dapper War Office clerk (who was a friend of the Gibson family), to Chelsea that we might explore Cheyne walk and its classic neighbourhood. I rode on the box by the coachman.

We alighted by the steamboat pier and explored, I walking with *Leah*.

We came to a very narrow street, quite straight, the narrowest street that could call itself a street at all, and rather long; we were the only people in it. It has since disappeared, with all that particular part of Chelsea.

Suddenly we saw a runaway horse without a rider coming along it at full gallop, straight at us, with a most demoralising sharp clatter of its iron hoofs on the stone pavement.

"Your backs to the wall!" cried Mr. Babbage, and we flattened ourselves to let the maddened brute go by, bridle and stirrups flying—poor Mrs. Gibson almost faint with terror.

Leah, instead of flattening herself against the wall, put her arms

round her mother, making of her own body a shield for her, and looked round at the horse as it came tearing up the street, striking sparks from the flagstones.

Nobody was hurt, for a wonder; but Mrs. Gibson was quite overcome. Mr. Babbage was very angry with Leah, whose back the horse actually grazed, as he all but caught his hoofs in her crinoline and hit her with a stirrup on the shoulder.

I could only think of Leah's face as she looked round at the approaching horse, with her protecting arms round her mother. It was such a sudden revelation to me of what she really was, and its expression was so hauntingly impressive that I could think of nothing else. Its mild, calm courage, its utter carelessness of self, its immense tenderness—all blazed out in such beautiful lines, in such beautiful white and black, that I lost all self-control; and when we walked back to the pier, following the rest of the party, I asked her to be my wife.

She turned very pale again, and the flesh of her chin quivered as she told me that was *quite impossible—and could never be*.

I asked her if there was anybody else, and she said, there was nobody, but that she did not wish ever to marry; that, beyond her parents and Ida, she loved and respected me more than anybody else in the whole world, but she could never marry me. She was much agitated, and said the sweetest, kindest things, but put all hope out of the question at once.

It was the greatest blow I have ever had in my life.

Three days after, I went to America; and before I came back I had started in New York the American branch of the house of Vougeot-Conti, and laid the real foundation of the largest fortune that has ever yet been made by selling wine, and of the long political career about which I will say nothing in these pages.

On my voyage out I wrote a long Blaze letter to Barty, and poured out all my grief, and my resignation to the decree which I felt to be irrevocable. I reminded him of that playful toss-up in Southampton Row, and told him that, having surrendered all claims myself, the best thing that could happen to me was that she should some day marry *him* (which I certainly did not think at all likely).

So henceforward, reader, you will not be troubled by your obedient servant with the loves of a prosperous merchant of wines. Had those loves been more successful, and the wines less so, you would never have heard of either.

Whether or not I should have been a happier man in the long-run I really can't say—mine has been, on the whole, a very happy life, as men's lives go; but I am bound to admit, in all due modesty, that the universe would probably have been the poorer by some very splendid people, and perhaps by some very splendid things it could ill have spared; and one great and beautifully-borne sorrow the less would have been ushered into this world of many sorrows.

It was a bright May morning (a year after this) when Barty and his

Aunt Caroline and his cousin Daphne and their servants left Antwerp for Düsseldorf on the Rhine.

At Malines they had to change trains, and spent half-an-hour at the station waiting for the express from Brussels and bidding farewell to their Mechlin friends, who had come there to wish them God-speed: the Abbé Lefebvre, Father Louis, and others; and the Torfses, père et mère; and little Frau, who wept freely as Lady Caroline kissed her and gave her a pretty little diamond brooch. Barty gave her a gold cross and a hearty shake of the hand, and she seemed quite heart-broken.

Then up came the long, full train, and their luggage was swallowed, and they got in, and the two guards blew their horns, and they left Malines behind them—with a mixed feeling of elation and regret.

They had not been very happy there, but many people had been very kind; and the place, with all its dreariness, had a strange, still charm, and was full of historic beauty and romantic associations.

Passing Louvain, Barty shook his fist at the Catholic University and its scientific priestly professors, who condemned one so lightly to a living death. He hated the aspect of the place, the very smell of it.

At Verviers they left the Belgian train; they had reached the limits of King Leopold's dominions. There was half-an-hour for lunch in the big refreshment-room, over which his Majesty and the Queen of the Belgians presided from the wall—nearly seven feet high each of them, and in their regal robes.

Just as the Rohan's ordered their repast another English party came to their table and ordered theirs—a distinguished old gentleman of naval bearings and aspect; a still young middle-aged lady, very handsome, with blue spectacles; and an immensely tall, fair girl, very fully developed, and so astonishingly beautiful that it almost took one's breath away merely to catch sight of her; and people were distracted from ordering their mid-day meal merely to stare at this magnificent goddess, who was evidently born to be a mother of heroes.

These British travellers had a valet, a courier, and two maids, and were evidently people of consequence.

Suddenly the lady with the blue spectacles (who had seated herself close to the Rohan party) got up and came round the table to Barty's aunt and said—

"You don't remember me, Lady Caroline—Lady Jane Royce!"

And an old acquaintance was renewed in this informal manner—possibly some old feud patched up.

Then everybody was introduced to everybody else, and they all lunched together, a scramble!

It turned out that Lady Jane Royce was in some alarm about her eyes, and was going to consult the famous Dr. Hasenclever, and brought her daughter with her, just as the London season had begun.

Her daughter was the "divine Julia" who had refused so many splendid offers—among them the little hunchback Lord who was to

have a thousand a day, "including Sundays;" a most unreasonable young woman, and a thorn in her mother's flesh.

The elderly gentleman, Admiral Royce, was Lady Jane's uncle-in-law, whose eyes were also giving him a little anxiety. He was a charming old stoic, by no means pompous or formal, or a martinet, and declared he remembered hearing of Barty as the naughtiest boy in the Guards; and took an immediate fancy to him in the consequence.

They had come from Brussels in the same train that had brought the Rohans from Malines, and they all journeyed together from Verviers to Düsseldorf in the same first-class carriage, as became English swells of the first water—for in those days no one ever thought of going first-class in Germany except the British aristocracy and a few native royalties.

The divine Julia turned out as fascinating as she was fair, being possessed of those high spirits that result from youth and health and fancy-freedom, and no cares to speak of. She was evidently also a very clever and accomplished young lady, absolutely without affectation of any kind, and amiable and frolicsome to the highest degree—a kind of younger Barty Josselin in petticoats; oddly enough, so like him in the face she might have been his sister.

Indeed, it was a lively party that journeyed to Düsseldorf that afternoon in that gorgeously-gilded compartment, though three out of the six were in deep mourning; the only person not quite happy being Lady Jane, who, in addition to her trouble about her eyes (which was really nothing to speak of), began to fidget herself miserably about Barty Josselin; for that wretched young detrimental was evidently beginning to ingratiate himself with the divine Julia as no young man had ever been known to do before, keeping her in fits of laughter, and also laughing at everything she said herself.

Alas for Lady Jane! it was to escape the attentions of a far less dangerous detrimental, and far less ineligible one, that she had brought her daughter with her all the way to Riffraath—"from Charybdis to Scylla," as we used to say at Brossard's, putting the cart before the horse, *more Latino!*

I ought also to mention that a young Captain Craham-Reece was a patient of Dr. Hasenclever's just then—and Captain Graham-Reece was heir to the octogenerian Earl of Ironsides, who was one of the four wealthiest peers in the United Kingdom, and had no direct descendants.

When they reached Düsseldorf they all went to the Breidenbacher Hotel, where rooms had been retained for them, all but Barty, who, as became his humbler means, chose the cheaper hotel Domhardt, which overlooks the market place adorned by the statue of the Elector that Heine has made so famous.

He took a long evening walk through the vernal Hof Gardens and by the Rhine, and thought of the beauty and splendour of the divine Julia; and sighed, and remembered that he was Mr. Nobody of Nowhere, *pictor ignotus*, with only one eye he could see with, and

possessed of a fortune which invested in the 3 per cents. would bring him just £6 a year—and made up his mind he would stick to his painting and keep as much away from her divinity as possible.

"O Martia, Martia!" he said aloud, as he suddenly felt the north at the right of him, "I hope that you are some lovely female soul, and that you know my weakness—namely, that one woman in every ten thousand has a face that drives me mad; and that I can see just as well with one eye as with two, in spite of my *punctum cæcum*! and that when that face is all but on a level with mine, good Lord! then am I lost indeed! I am but a poor penniless devil, without a name; oh, keep me from that ten-thousandth face, and cover my retreat!"

Next morning Lady Jane and Julia and the Admiral left for Riffraith—and Barty and his aunt and cousin went in search of lodgings; sweet it was, and bright and sunny, as they strolled down the broad Allée Strasse; a regiment of Uhlans came along on horseback, splendid fellows, the band playing the "Lorelei."

In the fulness of their hearts Daphne and Barty squeezed each other's hand to express the joy and elation they felt at the pleasantness of everything. She was his little sister once more, from whom he had so long been parted, and they loved each other very dearly.

"Que me voilà donc bien contente, mon petit Barty—et toi? la jolie ville, hein?"

"C'est le ciel, tout bonnement—et tu vas m'apprendre l'allemand, n'est-ce-pas, m'amour?"

"Oui, et nous lirons *Heine* ensemble; tiens, à propos! regarde le nom de la rue qui fait le coin! *Bolker Strasse*! c'est là qu'il est né le pauvre Heine! Ôte ton chapeau!"

(Barty nearly always spoke French with Daphne, as he did with my sister and me, and said "thee and thou.")

They found a furnished house that suited them in the Schadow Strasse, opposite Geissler's, where for two hours every Thursday and Sunday afternoon you might sit for sixpence in a pretty garden and drink coffee, beer, or Maitrank, and listen to lovely music, and dance in the evening under cover to strains of Strauss, Lanner, and Gungl, and other heavenly waltz-makers! With all their faults, they know how to make the best of their lives, these good Vaterlanders, and how to dance, and especially how to make music—and also how to fight! So we won't quarrel with them, after all!

Barty found for himself a cheap bedroom, high up in an immense house tenanted by many painters—some of them English and some American. He never forgot the delight with which he awoke next morning and opened his window and saw the silver Rhine among the trees, and the fir-clad hills of Grafenberg, and heard the gay painter fellows singing as they dressed; and he called out to the good-humoured slavey in the garden below—

"Johanna, mein Frühstück, bitte!"

A phrase he had carefully rehearsed with Daphne the evening before.

And, to his delight and surprise, Johanna understood the mysterious jargon quite easily, and brought him what he wanted with the most good-humoured grin he had ever seen on a female face.

Coffee and a roll and a pat of butter.

First of all he went to see Dr. Hasenclever at Riffraath, which was about half-an-hour by train, and then half-an-hour's walk—an immensely prosperous village, which owned its prosperity to the famous doctor, who attracted patients from all parts of the globe, even from America. The train that took Barty thither was full of them; for some chose to live in Düsseldorf.

The great man saw his patients on the ground floor of the König's Hotel, the principal hotel in Riffraath, the hall of which was always crowded with these afflicted ones—patiently waiting each his turn, or hers; and there Barty took his place at four in the afternoon; he had sent in his name at 10 A.M., and been told that he would be seen after four o'clock. Then he walked about the village, which was charming, with its gabled white houses, ornamented like the cottages in the Richter albums by black beams—and full of English, many of them with green shades or blue spectacles or a black patch over one eye; some of them being led, or picking their way by means of a stick, alas!

Barty met the three Royces, walking with an old gentleman of aristocratic appearance, and a very nice looking young one (who was Captain Graham-Reece). The Admiral gave him a friendly nod—Lady Jane a nod that almost amounted to a cut direct. But the divine Julia gave him a look and a smile that were warm enough to make up for much maternal frigidity.

Later on, in a tobacconist's shop, he again met the Admiral, who introduced him to the aristocratic old gentleman, Mr. Beresford Duff, secretary to the Admiralty—who evidently knew all about him, and inquired quite affectionately after Lady Caroline, and invited him to come and drink tea at five-o'clock: a new form of hospitality of his own invention—it has caught on!

Barty lunched at the König's Hotel table-d'hôte, which was crowded, principally with English people, none of whom he had ever met or heard of. But from these he heard a good deal of the Royces and Captain Graham-Reece and Mr. Beresford Duff, and other smart people who lived in furnished houses or expensive apartments away from the rest of the world, and were objects of general interest and curiosity among the smaller British fry.

Riffraath was a microcosm of English society, from the lower middle class upwards, with all its respectabilities and incompatibilities and disabilities—its narrownesses and meannesses and snobbishnesses, its gossipings and backbitings and toadyings and snubbings—delicate little social things of England that foreigners don't understand!

The sensation of the hour was the advent of Julia, the divine Julia! Gossip was already rife about her and Captain Reece. They had taken

a long walk in the woods together the day before—with Lady Jane and the Admiral far behind, out of earshot, almost out of sight!

In the afternoon, between four and five, Barty had his interview with the doctor—a splendid, white-haired old man, of benign and intelligent aspect, almost mesmeric, with his assistant sitting by him.

He used no new-fangled ophthalmoscope, but asked many questions in fairly good French, and felt with his fingers, and had many German asides with the assistant. He told Barty he had lost the sight of his left eye for ever; but that with care he would keep that of the other one for the rest of his life—barring accidents, of course. That he must never eat cheese or drink beer. That he (the doctor) would like to see him once a week or fortnight or so for a few months yet—and gave him a prescription for an eye lotion, and dismissed him happy.

Half a loaf is so much better than no bread, if you can only count upon it!

Barty went straight to Mr. Beresford Duff's, and there found a very agreeable party, including the divine Julia, who was singing little songs very prettily and accompanying herself on a guitar.

"'You ask me why I look so pale?'" sang Julia, just as Barty entered: and red as a rose was she.

Lady Jane didn't seem at all overjoyed to see Barty, but Julia did, and did not disguise the seeming.

There were eight or ten people there, and they all appeared to know about him, and all that concerned or belonged to him. It was the old London world over again, in little! the same tittle-tattle about well-known people, and nothing else—as if nothing else existed; a genial, easy-going, good-natured world, that he had so often found charming for a time, but in which he was never quite happy and had no proper place of his own, all through that fatal bar-sinister—la barre de bâtarde; a world that was his and yet not his, and in whose midst his position was a false one, but where every one took him for granted at once as one of *them*, so long as he never trespassed beyond that sufferance; that there must be no love-making to lovely young heiresses by the bastard of Antoinette Josselin was taken for granted also!

Before Barty had been there half-an-hour two or three people had evidently lost their hearts to him in friendship; among them, to Lady Jane's great discomfiture, the handsome and amiable Graham-Reece, the cynosure of all female eyes in Riffraith; and when Barty (after very little pressing by Miss Royce) twanged her guitar and sang little French songs—French, and English, funny and sentimental—he became, as he had so often become in other scenes, the Rigoletto of the Company; and Riffraith was a kingdom in which he might be court jester in ordinary if he chose, whenever he elected to honour it with his gracious and facetious musical presence.

So much for his début in that strange little overgrown busy village! What must it be like now?

Dr. Hasenclever has been gathered to his fathers long ago, and

nobody that I know of has taken his place. All those new hotels and lodging-houses and smart shops—what can they be turned into? Barracks? prisons? military hospitals and sanatoriums? How dull!

Lady Caroline and Daphne and Barty between them added considerably to the gaiety of Düsseldorf that summer—especially when Royces and Reeces and Duffs, and such like people, came there from Riffraath to lunch, or tea, or dinner, or for walks or drives or rides to Grafenberg or Neanderthal, or steamboatings to Neuss.

There were one or two other English families in Düsseldorf, living there for economy's sake, but yet of the world—of the kind that got to be friends with the Rohans; half-pay old soldiers and sailors and their families, who introduced agreeable and handsome Uhlans and hussars—from their Serene Highnesses the Princes Fritz and Hans von Eselbraten-Himmelsblutwürst-Silberschinken, each passing rich on £200 a year, down to poor Lieutenants von this or von that, with nothing but their pay and their thirty-two quarterings.

Also a few counts and barons, and princes not serene, but with fine German fortunes looming for them in the future, though none amounting to £1000 a day, like little Lord Orrisroot's!

Soon there was hardly a military heart left whole in the town; Julia had eaten them all up, except one or two that had been unconsciously nibbled by little Daphne.

Barty did not join in these aristocratic revels; he had become a pupil of Herr Duffenthaler, and worked hard in his master's studio with two brothers of the brush—one English, the other American; delightful men who remained his friends for life.

Indeed he lived among the painters, who all got to love "der schöne Barty Josselin" like a brother.

Now and then, of an evening, being much pressed by his aunt, he would show himself at a small party in the Schadow Strasse, and sing, and be funny, and attentive to the ladies, and render himself discreetly useful and agreeable all round—and make that party go off. Lady Caroline would have been far happier had he lived with them altogether. But she felt herself responsible for her innocent and wealthy little niece.

It was an article of faith with Lady Caroline that no normal and properly-constituted young woman could see much of Barty without falling over head and ears in love with him—and this would never do for Daphne. Besides they were first-cousins. So she acquiesced in the independence of his life apart from them. She was not responsible for the divine Julia, who might fall in love with him just as she pleased, and welcome! That was Lady Jane's look-out, and Captain Graham-Reece's.

But Barty always dined with his aunt and cousin on Thursdays and Sundays, after listening to the music in Geissler's Garden opposite, and drinking coffee with them there, and also with Prince Fritz and Prince Hans, who always joined the party and smoked their

cheap cigars; and sometimes the divine Julia would make one of the party too, with her mother and uncle and Captain Reece; and the good painter fellows would envy from afar their beloved but too fortunate comrade; and the hussars and Uhlans von this and von that, would find seats and tables as near the princely company as possible.

And every time a general officer entered the garden, up stood every officer of inferior rank till the great man had comfortably seated



"YOU DON'T MEAN TO SAY YOU'RE GOING TO PAINT FOR HIRE!"

himself somewhere in the azure sunshine of Julia's forget-me-not warm glance.

And before the summer had fulfilled itself, and the roses at Geissler's were overblown, it became evident to Lady Caroline, if to none other, that Julia had eyes for no one else in the world but Barty Josselin. I had it from Lady Caroline herself.

But Barty Josselin had eyes only (such eyes as they were) for his work at Herr Duffenthaler's, and lived laborious days, except on Thursday and Sunday afternoons, and shunned delights, except to dine at the Runsborg Speiserei with his two fellow-pupils, and Henley and Armstrong and Bancroft and du Maurier and others, all painters, mostly British and Yankee; and an uncommonly lively and agreeable repast that was! And afterwards, long walks by moon

or star light, or music at each other's rooms, and that engrossing technical shop talk that never palls on those who talk it. No Guardsman's talk of turf or sport or the ballet had ever been so good as this, in Barty's estimation; no agreeable society gossip at Mr. Beresford Duff's Riffraff tea-parties!

Once in every fortnight or so Barty would report himself to Dr. Hasenclever, and spend the day in Riffraff and lunch with the good old Beresford Duff, who was very fond of him, and who lamented over his loss of caste in devoting himself professionally to art.

"God bless me—my dear Barty, you don't mean to say you're going to paint for *hire*!"

"Indeed I am, if any one will hire me. How else am I to live?"

"Well, *you* know best, my dear boy; but I should have thought the Rohans might have got you something better than *that*. It's true, Buckner does it, and Swinton, and Francis Grant! But *still*, you know . . . there *are* other ways of getting on for a fellow like you. Look at Prince Gelbioso, who ran away with the Duchess of Flitwick! He didn't sing a bit better than you do, and as for looks, you beat him hollow, my dear boy; yet all London went mad about Prince Gelbioso, and so did she; and off she bolted with him, bag and baggage, leaving husband and children and friends and all! and she'd got ten thousand a year of her own; and when the Duke divorced her they were married, and lived happily ever after—in Italy; and some of the best people called upon 'em, by George! . . . just to spite the Duke!"

Barty felt it would seem priggish or even insincere if he were to disclaim any wish to emulate Prince Gelbioso; so he merely said he thought painting easier on the whole, and not so risky; and the good Beresford Duff talked of other things—of the divine Julia, and what a good thing it would be if she and Graham-Recce could make a match of it.

"Two of the finest fortunes in England, by George! they *ought* to come together, if only just for the fun of the thing! Not that she is a bit in love with him—I'll eat my hat if she is! What a pity *you* ain't goin' to be Lord Ironsides, Barty!"

Barty confessed *he* shouldn't much object, for one.

"But, 'ni l'or ni la grandeur ne nous rendent heureux,' as we used to be taught at school."

"Ah, that's all gammon; wait till you're *my* age, my young friend, and as poor as *I* am," said Beresford Duff. And so the two friends talked on, Mentor and Telemachus—and we needn't listen any further.

PART SEVENTH

"Old winter was gone
In his weakness back to the mountains hoar,
And the spring came down
From the planet that hovers upon the shore
Where the sea of sunlight encroaches
Of the limits of the wintry night;
In the land, and the air, and the sea
Rejoice not when spring approaches,
We did not rejoice in thee,
Ginevra!"

—SHELLEY.

RIFFRATH, besides its natives and its regular English colony of residents, had a floating population that constantly changed. And every day new faces were to be found drinking tea with Mr. Beresford Duff—and all these faces were well known in society at home, you may be sure; and Barty made capital caricatures of them all, which were treasured up and carried back to England; one or two of them turn up now and then at a sale at Christie's and fetch a great price. I got a little pen-and-ink outline of Captain Reece there, drawn before he came into the title. I had to give forty-seven pounds ten for it, not only because it was a speaking likeness of the late Lord Ironsides as a young man, but on account of the little "B. J." in the corner.

And only the other evening I sat at dinner next to the Dowager Countess. Heavens! what a beautiful creature she still is, with her prematurely white hair and her long thick neck!

And after dinner we talked of Barty—she with that delightful frankness that always characterised her through life I am told.

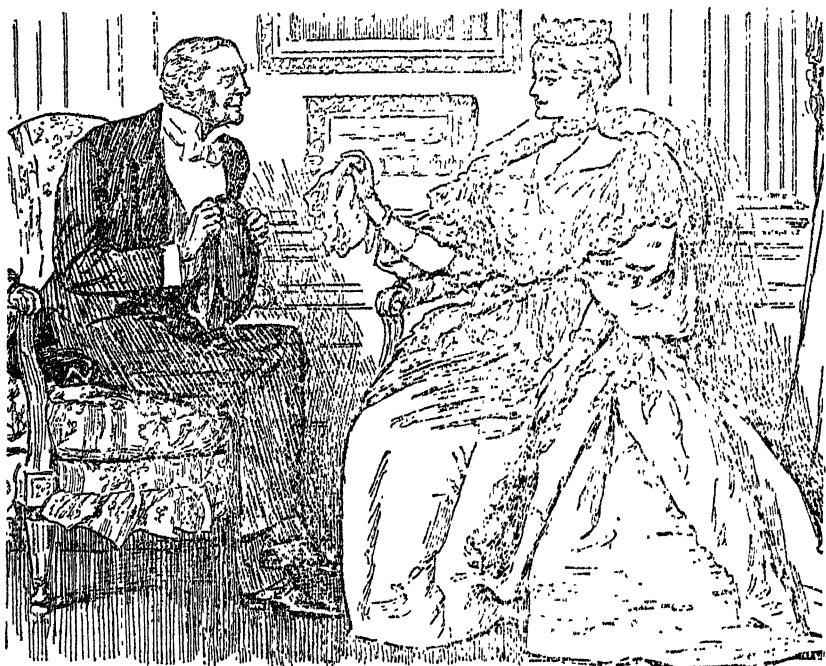
"Dear Barty Josselin! how desperately in love I was with that man, to be sure! Everybody was—he might have thrown the handkerchief as he pleased in Riffraath, I can tell you, Sir Robert! He was the handsomest man I ever saw, and wore a black pork-pie hat and a little yellow Vandyck beard and moustache; just the colour of Turkish tobacco, like his hair! All that sounds odd now, doesn't it? Fashions have changed—but not for the better! And what a figure! and such fun he was! and always in good spirits, poor boy! and now he's dead, and it's one of the greatest names in all the world! Well, if he'd thrown that handkerchief at me just about then, I should have picked it up—and you're welcome to tell all the world so, Sir Robert!"

And next day I got a kind and pretty little letter:

"DEAR SIR ROBERT,—I was quite serious last night. Barty Josselin was *mes premières amours*! Whether he ever guessed it or not, I

can't say. If not, he was very obtuse! Perhaps he feared to fall, and didn't feel fain to climb in consequence. I all but proposed to him, in fact! Anyhow, I am proud my girlish fancy should have fallen on such a man!

"I told him so myself only last year, and we had a good laugh over old times; and then I told his wife, and she seemed much pleased. I can understand his preference, and I am old enough to forgive it and laugh—although there is even now a tear in the laughter.



"HE MIGHT HAVE THROWN THE HANDKERCHIEF AS HE PLEASED!"

You know his daughter, Julia Mainwaring, is my godchild; sometimes she sings her father's old songs to me—

"*Petit chagrin de notre enfance
Coûte un soupir!*"

"Do you remember?"

"Poor Ironsides knew all about it when he married me, and often declared I had amply made up to him for that and many other things—over and over again. Il avait bien raison; and made of me a very happy wife and a most unhappy widow.

Put this in your book, if you like.—Sincerely yours,

"JULIA IRONSIDES."

Thus time flowed smoothly and pleasantly for Barty all through

the summer. In August the Royces left, and also Captain Reece—they for Scotland, he for Algiers—and appointed to meet again in Riffraath next spring.

In October Lady Caroline took her niece to Rome, and Barty was left behind to his work, very much to her grief and Daphne's.

He wrote to them every Monday, and always got a letter back on the Saturday following.

Barty spent the winter hard at work, but with lots of play between, and was happy among his painter fellows—and sketching and caricaturing, and skating and sleighing with the English who remained in Düsseldorf, and young von this and young von that. I have many of his letters describing this genial easy life—letters full of droll and charming sketches.

He does not mention the fair Julia much, but there is no doubt that the remembrance of her much preoccupied him, and kept him from losing his heart to any of the fair damsels, English and German, whom he skated and danced with, and sketched and sang to.

As a matter of fact, he had never yet lost his heart in his life—not even to Julia. He never said much about his love-making with Julia to me. But his aunt did—and I listened between the words, as I always do. His four or five year's career in London as a thoroughgoing young rake had given him a very deep insight into woman's nature—an insight rare at his age, for all his perceptions were astonishingly acute, and his unconscious faculty of sympathetic observation and induction and deduction immense.

And, strange to say, if that heart had never been touched, it had never been corrupted either, and probably for that very reason—that he had never been in love with these sirens. It is only when true love fades away at last in the arms of lust that the youthful, manly heart is wrecked and ruined and befouled.

He made up his mind that art should be his sole mistress henceforward, and that the devotion of a lifetime would not be price enough to pay for her favours, if but she would one day be kind. He had to make up for so much lost time, and had begun his wooing so late! Then he was so happy with his male friends! Whatever void remained in him when his work was done for the day could be so thoroughly filled up by Henley and Bancroft and Armstrong and du Maurier and the rest, that there was no room for any other and warmer passion. Work was a joy by itself; the rest from it as great a joy; and these alternations were enough to fill a life. To how many great artists had they sufficed! and what happy lives had been led, with no other distraction, and how glorious and successful! Only the divine Julia, in all the universe, was worthy to be weighed in the scales with these, and she was not for the likes of Mr. Nobody of Nowhere.

Besides, there was the faithful Martia. Punctually every evening the ever-comforting sense of the north filled him as he jumped into bed; and he whispered his prayers audibly to this helpful spirit, or whatever it might be, that had given him a sign and saved him from

a cowardly death, and filled his life and thoughts as even no Julia could.

And yet, although he loved best to forgather with those of his own sex, woman meant much to him! There *must* be a woman somewhere in the world—a needle in a bottle of hay—a nature that could dovetail and fit in with his own; but what a life-long quest to find her! She must be young and beautiful, like Julia—rien que ça!—and as kind and clever and simple and well-bred and easy to live with as Aunt Caroline, and, heavens! how many things besides, before poor Mr. Nobody of Nowhere could make her happy, and be made happy by her.

So Mr. Nobody of Nowhere gave it up, and stuck to his work, and made much progress, and was well content with things as they were.

He had begun late, and found many difficulties in spite of his great natural facility. His principle stock-in-trade was his keen perception of human beauty, of shape and feature and expression, male or female—of face or figure or movement; and a great love and appreciation of human limbs, especially hands and feet.

With a very few little pen-strokes he could give the most marvelously subtle likenesses of people he knew—beautiful or ordinary or plain or hideous; and the beauty of the beautiful people, just hinted in mere outline, was so keen and true and fascinating that this extraordinary power of expressing it amounted to real genius.

It is a difficult thing, even for a master, to fully render with an ordinary steel pen and a drop of common ink (and of a size no bigger than your little finger nail) the full face of a beautiful woman, let us say; or a child, in sadness or merriment or thoughtful contemplation; and make it easily and unmistakably recognisable as a good photograph, but with all the subtle human charm and individuality of expression delicately emphasised in a way that no photograph has ever achieved yet.

And this he could always do in a minute from sheer memory and unconscious observation; and in another few minutes he would add on the body, in movement or repose, and of a resemblance so wonderful and a grace so enchanting, or a humour so happily, naïvely droll, that one forgot to criticise the technique, which was quite that of an amateur; indeed, with all the success he achieved as an artist, he remained an amateur all his life. Yet his greatest admirers were among the most consummate and finished artists of their day, both here and abroad.

It was with his art as with his singing: both were all wrong, yet both gave extraordinary pleasure; one almost feared that regular training would mar the gift of God, so much of the charm we all so keenly felt lay in the very imperfections themselves—just as one loved him personally as much for his faults as for his virtues.

"Il a les qualités de ses défauts, le beau Josselin," said M. Taine one day.

"Mon cher," said M. Renan, "ses défauts sont ses meilleures qualités."

So he spent a happy tranquil winter, and wrote of his happiness and his tranquillity to Lady Caroline and Daphne and Ida and me; and before he knew where he was, or we, the almond-trees blossomed again, and then the lilacs and limes and horse-chestnuts and syringas; and the fireflies flew in and out of his bedroom at night, and the many nightingales made such music in the Hof gardens that he could scarcely sleep for them; and other nightingales came to make music for him too—most memorable music! Stockhausen, Jenny Ney, Joachim, Madame Schumann; for the triennial Musik festival was held in Düsseldorf that year (a month later than usual); and musical festivals are things they manage uncommonly well in Germany. Barty, unseen and unheard, as becomes a chorus-singer, sang in the choruses of Gluck's *Iphigenia*, and heard and saw everything for nothing.

But, before this, Captain Reece came back to Riffraath, and, according to appointment, Admiral Royce and Lady Jane, and Julia, lovelier than ever; and all the sweetness she was so full of rose in her heart and gathered in her eyes as they once more looked on Barty Josselin.

He steeled and stiffened himself like a man who knew that the divine Julias of this world were for his betters—not for him! Nevertheless, as he went to bed, and thought of the melting gaze that had met his, he was deeply stirred; and actually, though the north was in him, he forgot, for the first time in all that twelvemonth, for the first time since that terrible night in Malines, to say his prayers to Martia—and next morning he found a letter by his bedside in pencil-written Blaze of his own handwriting:

"BARTY MY BELOVED,—A crisis has come in your affairs, which are mine; and, great as the cost is to me, I must write again, at the risk of betraying what amounts to a sacred trust; a secret that I have innocently surprised, the secret of a noble woman's heart.

"One of the richest girls in England, one of the healthiest and most beautiful women in the whole world, a bride fit for an emperor, is yours for the asking. It is my passionate wish, and a matter of life and death to me, that you and Julia Royce should become man and wife; when you are, you shall both know why.

"Mr. Nobody of Nowhere—as you are so fond of calling yourself—you shall be such, some day, that the best and highest in the land will be only too proud to be your humble friends and followers; no woman is too good for you—only one good enough! and she loves you: of that I feel sure—and it is impossible you should not love her back again.

"I have known her from a baby, and her father and mother also; I have inhabited her, as I have inhabited you, although I have never been able to give her the slightest intimation of the fact. You are both, physically, the most perfect human beings I was ever in; and in heart and mind the most simply made, the most richly gifted, and

the most admirably balanced; and I have inhabited many thousands, and in all parts of the globe.

"You, Barty, are the only one I have ever been able to hold communication with, or make to feel my presence; it was a strange chance that—a happy accident; it saved your life. I am the only one, among many thousands of homeless spirits, who has ever been able to influence an earthly human being, or even make him feel the magnetic current that flows through us all, and by which we are able to exist; all the rappings and table-turnings are mere hysterical imaginations, or worse—the cheapest form of either trickery or self-deception that can be. Barty, your unborn children are of a moment to me beyond anything you can realise or imagine, and Julia must be their mother; Julia Royce, and no other woman in the world.

"It is in you to become so great when you are ripe that she will worship the ground you walk upon; but you can only become as great as that through her and through me, who have a message to deliver to mankind here on earth, and none but you to give it a voice—not one. But I must have my reward, and that can only come through your marriage with Julia.

"When you have read this, Barty, go straight to Riffraeth, and see Julia if you can, and be to her as you have so often been to any woman you wish to please, and who were not worth pleasing. Her heart is her own to give, like her fortune; she can do what she likes with them both, and will—her mother notwithstanding, and in the teeth of the whole world.

"Poor as you are, maimed as you are, irregularly born as you are, it is better for her that she should be your wife than the wife of any man living, whoever he be.

"Look at yourself in the glass, and say at once—

"'Martia, I'm off to Riffraeth as soon as I've swallowed my breakfast!'

"And then I'll go about my business with a light heart and an easy mind. MARTIA."

Much moved and excited, Barty looked in the glass and did as he was bid, and the north left him; and Johanna brought him his breakfast, and he started for Riffraeth.

All through this winter that was so happily spent by Barty in Düsseldorf things did not go very happily in London for the Gibsons. Mr. Gibson was not meant for business; nature intended him as a rival to Keeley or Buckstone.

He was extravagant, and so was his wife; they were both given to frequent and most expensive hospitalities; and he to cards, and she to dressing herself and her daughter more beautifully than quite became their position in life. The handsome and prosperous shop in Cheapside—the "emporium," as he loved to call it—was not enough to provide for all these luxuries; so he took another in

Conduit Street, and decorated it and stocked it at immense expense, and called it the "Universal Fur Company," and himself the "Head of a West End firm."

Then he speculated, and was not successful, and his affairs got into tangle.

And a day came when he found he could not keep up these two shops and his private house in Tavistock Square as well; the carriage was put down first—a great grief to Mrs. Gibson; and finally, to her intense grief, it became necessary to give up the pretty house itself.

It was decided that their home in the future must be over the new emporium in Conduit Street; Mrs. Gibson had a properly-constituted English shopkeeper's wife's horror of living over her husband's shop—the idea almost broke her heart, and as a little consolation, while the necessary changes were being brought for their altered mode of life, Mr. Gibson treated her and Leah and my sister to a trip up the Rhine—and Mrs. Bletchley, the splendid old Jewess (Leah's grandmother), who suffered or fancied she suffered, in her eyesight, took it into her head that she would like to see the famous Dr. Hasenclever in Riffraath, and elected to journey with them—at all events as far as Düsseldorf. I would have escorted them, but that my father was ill, and I had to replace him in Barge Yard; besides, I was not yet quite cured of my unhappy passion, though in an advanced stage of convalescence; and I did not wish to put myself under conditions that might retard my complete recovery, or even bring on a relapse. I wished to love Leah as a sister; in time I succeeded in doing so; she has been fortunate in her brother, though I say it who shouldn't—and, O heavens! haven't I been fortunate in my sister Leah?

My own sister Ida wrote to Barty to find rooms and meet them at the station, and fixed the day and hour of their arrival; and commissioned him to take seats for Gluck's *Iphigenia*.

She thought more of *Iphigenia* than of the Drachenfels or Ehrenbreitstein; and was overjoyed at the prospect of once more being with Barty, whom she loved as well as she loved me, if not even better. He was fortunate in his sister, too!

And the Rhine in May did very well as a background to all these delights.

So Mr. Babbage (the friend of the family) and I saw them safely on board the *Baron Osy* ("the Ank-works package," as Mrs. Gamp called it), which landed them safely in the Place Verte at Antwerp; and then they took train for Düsseldorf, changing at Malines and Verviers; and looked forward eagerly, especially Ida, to the meeting with Barty at the little station by the Rhine.

Barty, as we know, started for Riffraath at Martia's written command, his head full of perplexing thoughts.

Who was Martia? What was she? "A disembodied conscience?" Whose? Not his own, which counselled the opposite course.

He had once seen a man at a show with a third rudimentary leg sticking out behind, and was told this extra limb belonged to a twin, the remaining portions of whom had not succeeded in getting themselves begotten and born. Could Martia be a frustrated and undeveloped twin sister of his own, that interested herself in his affairs, and could see with his eyes and hear with his ears, and had found the way of communicating with him during his sleep—and was yet apart from him, as phenomenal twins are apart from each other, however closely linked—and had, moreover, not managed to have any part of her own body born into this world at all? .

She wrote like him; her epistolary style was his very own, every turn of phrase, every little mannerism. The mystery of it overwhelmed him again, though he had grown somewhat accustomed to the idea during the last twelvemonth. *Why* was she so anxious he should marry Julia? Had he, situated as he was, the right to win the love of this splendid creature, in the face of the world's opposition and her family's—he, a beggar and a bastard? Would it be right and honest and fair to her?

And then, again, was he so desperately in love with her, after all, that he should give up the life of art and toil he had planned for himself, and go through existence as the husband of a rich and beautiful woman belonging, first of all, to the world and society, of which she was so brilliant an ornament that her husband must needs remain in the background for ever, even if he were a gartered duke or a belted earl?

What success of his own would he ever hope to achieve, handicapped as he would be by all the ease and luxury she would bring him? He had grown to love the poverty which ever lends such strenuousness to endeavour. He thought of an engraving he had once taken a fancy to in Brussels, and purchased and hung up in his bedroom. *I have it now!* It is after Gallait, and represents a picturesquely poor violinist and his violin in a garret, and underneath is written, "Art et liberté."

Then he thought of Julia's lovely face and magnificent body—and all his manhood thrilled as he recalled the look in her eyes when they met his the day before.

This was the strongest kind of temptation by which his nature could ever be assailed—he knew himself to be weak as water when that came his way, the ten-thousandth face (and the figure to match)! He had often prayed to Martia to deliver him from such a lure. But here was Martia on the side of the too sweet enemy!

The train stopped for a few minutes at Neanderthal, and he thought he could think better if he got out and walked in that beautiful valley an hour or two—there was no hurry; he would take another train later, in time to meet Julia at Beresford Duff's, where she was sure to be. So he walked among the rocks, the lonely rocks, and sat and pondered in the famous cave where the skull was found—that simple prehistoric cranium which could never have been so pathetically nonplussed by such a dilemma as this when it was a human head!

And the more he pondered the less he came to a conclusion. It seemed as though there were the "tug of war" between Martia and all that he felt to be best in himself—his own conscience, his independence as a man, his sense of honour. He took her letter out of his pocket to re-read, and with it came another letter; it was from my sister, Ida Maurice. It told him when they would arrive in Düsseldorf.

He jumped up in alarm—it was that very day. He had quite forgotten!

He ran off to the station, and missed a train, and had to wait an hour for another; but he got himself to the Rhine station in Düsseldorf a few minutes before the train from Belgium arrived.

Everything was ready for the Gibson party—lodgings and tea and supper to follow—he had seen to all that before; so there he walked up and down, waiting and still revolving over and over again in his mind the troublous question that so bewildered and oppressed him. Who was Martia? what was she—that he could take her for a guide in the most momentous business of his life; and what were her credentials?

And what was love? Was it love he felt for this young goddess with yellow hair and light-blue eyes so like his own, who towered in her full-blown frolicsome splendour among the sons and daughters of men, with her moist, ripe lips so richly framed for happy love and laughter—that royal milk-white fawn that had only lain in the roses and fed on the lilies of life?

"Oh, Mr. Nobody of Nowhere; be at least a man; let no one ever call you the basest thing an able-bodied man can become, a fortune-hunting adventurer!"

Then a bell rang, and the smoke of the coming train was visible—ten minutes late. The tickets were taken, and it slowed into the station and stopped. Ida's head and face were seen peering through one of the second-class windows, on the look-out, and Barty opened the door, and there was a warm and affectionate greeting between them; the meeting was joy to both.

Then he was warmly greeted by Mrs. Gibson, who introduced him to her mother; then he was conscious of somebody he had not seen yet because she stood at his blind side (indeed, he had all but forgotten her existence); namely, the presence of a very tall and most beautiful dark-haired young lady, holding out her slender gloved hand, and gazing up into his face with the most piercing and strangest and blackest eyes that ever were; yet so soft and quick, and calm and large, and kind and wise and gentle, that their piercingness was but an added seduction; one felt they could never pierce too deep for the happiness of the heart they pronged and riddled and perforated through and through!

Involuntarily came into Barty's mind, as he shook the slender hand, a little song of Schubert's he had just learnt—

"Du bist die Ruh', der Friede mild!"

And wasn't it odd?—all his doubts and perplexities resolved

themselves at once, as by some enchantment, into a lovely unexpected chord of extreme simplicity; and Martia was gently but firmly put aside, and the divine Julia quietly relegated to the gilded throne which was her fit and proper apanage.

Barty saw to the luggage, and sent it on, and they all went on foot behind it.

The bridge of boats across the Rhine was open in the middle to let a wood-raft go by down stream. This raft from some distant forest was so long they had to wait nearly twenty minutes; and the prow of it had all but lost itself in the western purple and gold and dun of sky and river while it was still passing the bridge.

All this was new and delightful to the Londoners, who were also delighted with the rooms Barty had taken for them in the König's Allee and the tea that awaited them there. Leah made tea, and gave a cup to Barty. That was a good cup of tea, better even than the tea Julia was making (that very moment, no doubt) at Beresford Duff's.

Then the elder ladies rested, and Barty took Leah and Ida for a walk in the Hof gardens. They were charmed with everything—especially the fireflies at dusk. Leah said little; she was not a very talkative person outside her immediate family circle. But Ida and Barty had much to say.

Then home to supper at the Gibsons' lodgings, and Barty sat opposite Leah, and drank in the beauty of her face, which had so wonderfully ripened and accentuated and individualised itself since he had seen her last, three years before.

As he discreetly gazed, whenever she was not looking his way, saying to himself, like Geraint: " 'Here by God's rood is the one maid for me,' " he suddenly felt the north, and started with a kind of terror as he remembered Martia. He bade the company a hasty good-night, and went for a long walk by the Rhine, and had a long talk with his Egeria.

"Martia," said he, in a low but audible voice, "it's no good, I *can't*; c'est plus fort que moi. I can't sell myself to a woman for gold; besides I can't fall in love with Julia; I don't know why, but I *can't*; I will never marry her. I don't deserve that she should care for me; perhaps she doesn't, perhaps you're quite mistaken, and if she does, it's only a young girl's fancy. What does a girl of that age really know about her own heart? and how base I should be to take advantage of her innocence and inexperience!"

And then he went on in a passionate and eager voice to explain all he had thought of during the day and still further defend his recalcitrancy.

"Give me at least your reasons, Martia; tell me, for God's sake, who you are and what! Are you *me*? are you the spirit of my mother? Why do you love me, as you say you do, with a love passing the love of woman? What am I to you? Why are you so bent on worldly things?"

This monologue lasted more than an hour, and he threw himself

on to his bed quite worn out, and slept at once, in spite of the nightingales, who had filled the starlit, breezy, balmy night with their shrill, sweet clamour.

Next morning as he expected, he found a letter:—

“Barty, you are ruining me and breaking my life, and wrecking the plans of many years—plans made before you were born or thought of.

“Who am I, indeed? Who is this demure young black-eyed witch that has come between us, this friend of Ida Maurice’s?

“She’s the cause of all my misery, I feel sure; with Ida’s eyes I saw you look at her; you never yet looked at Julia like that!—never at any woman before!

“Who is she? No mate for a man like you, I feel sure. In the first place, she is not rich; I could tell that by the querulous complaints of her middle-class mother. She’s just fit to be some pious Quaker’s wife, or a Sister of Charity, or a governess, or a hospital nurse, or a nun—no companion for a man destined to move the world!

“Barty, you don’t *know* what you are; you have never *thought*; you have never yet looked within!

“Barty, with Julia by your side and me at your back, you will be a leader of men, and sway the destinies of your country, and raise it above all other nations, and make it the arbiter of Europe—of the whole world—and your seed will ever be first among the foremost of the earth.

“Will you give up all this for a pair of bright black eyes and a pretty white skin? Isn’t Julia white enough for you?

“A painter? What a trade for a man built like you! Take the greatest of them; what have they ever really mattered? What do they matter now, except to those who want to imitate them and can’t, or to those who live by buying cheap the fruits of their long labours, and selling them dear as so much wall furniture for the vulgar rich? Besides, you will never be a great painter; you’ve begun too late!

“Think of yourself ten years hence—a king among men, with the world at your feet, and at those of the glorious woman who will have smoothed your path to greatness and fame and power! Mistress and wife—goddess and queen in one!

“Think of the poor struggling painter, painting his poor little pictures in his obscure corner to feed half-a-dozen hungry children and the anxious, careworn wife, whose beauty has long faded away in the petty, sordid, hopeless domestic struggle, just as her husband’s little talent has long been wasted and used up in wretched pot-boilers for mere bread; think of poverty, debt and degradation, and all the miserable ugliness of life—the truest, tritest, and oldest story in the world! Love soon flies out of the window when these wolves snarl at the door.

"Think of all this, Barty, and think of the despair you are bringing on one lost lonely soul who loves you as a mother loves her first-born, and has founded such hopes on you; dismiss this pretty little middle-class puritan from your thoughts, and go back to Julia.

"I will not hurry your decision; I will come back in exactly a week from to-night. I am at your mercy.

"MARTIA."

This letter made Barty very unhappy. It was a strange dilemma.

What is it that now and again makes a woman, in a single moment, take such a powerful grip of a man's fancy that he can never shake himself free again, and never wants to?

Tunes can be like that, sometimes. Not the pretty little tinkling tunes that please everybody at once; the pleasure of them can fade in a year, a month—even a week, a day! But those from a great mint, and whose charm will last a man his lifetime!

Many years ago a great pianist, to amuse some friends (of whom I was one), played a series of waltzes by Schubert which I had never heard before—the "*Soirées de Vienne*," I think they were called. They were lovely from beginning to end; but one short measure in particular was full of such extraordinary enchantment for me that it has really haunted me through life. It is as if it were made on purpose for me alone, a little intimate aside à mon intention—the gainliest, happiest thought I had ever heard expressed in music. For nobody else seemed to think those particular bars were more beautiful than all the rest; but, oh! the difference to me!

And said I to myself: "That's Leah; and all the rest is some heavenly garden of roses she's walking in!"

Tempo di valsa—

*Rum—tiddle-iddle um tum tum,
Tiddle-tiddle-iddle-iddle um-tum, tum;
Tum tiddle-iddle-iddle um tum, tum,
Tiddle-iddle, iddle-hay! . . . &c., &c.*

That's how the little measure begins, and it goes on just for a couple of pages. I can't write music, unfortunately, and I've nobody by me at just this moment who can; but if the reader is musical and knows the "*Soirées de Vienne*," he will guess the particular waltz I mean.

Well, the Düsseldorf railway station is not a garden of roses; but when Leah stepped out of that second-class carriage and looked straight at Barty, *dans le blanc des yeux*, he fitted her to the tune he loved best just then (not knowing the "*Soirées de Vienne*"), and it's one of the tunes that last-for ever—

"Du bist die Ruh', der Friede mild!"

Barty's senses were not as other men's senses. With his one eye he saw much that most of us can't see with two; I feel sure of this. And he suddenly saw in Leah's face, now she was quite grown up, that

which bound him to her for life—some veiled promise, I suppose; we can't explain these things.

Barty escorted the Gibson party to Riffraath, and put down Mrs. Bletchley's name for Dr. Hasenclever, and then took them to the woods of Hammerfest, close by, with which they were charmed. On the way back to the hotel they met Lady Jane and Miss Royce and the good Beresford Duff, who all bowed to Barty, and Julia's blue glance crossed Leah's black one.

"Oh, what a lovely girl!" said Leah to Barty. "What a pity she's so tall; why, I'm sure she's half a head taller than even I, and they



DR. HASENCLEVER AND MRS. BLETCHLEY

make *my* life a burden to me at home because I'm such a giantess! Who is she? You know her very well, I suppose?"

"She's a Miss Julia Royce, a great heiress. Her father's dead; he was a wealthy Norfolk Squire, and she was his only child."

"Then I suppose she's a very aristocratic person; she looks so, I'm sure!"

"Very much so indeed," said Barty.

"Dear me! it seems unfair, doesn't it, having everything like that; no wonder she looks so happy!"

Then they went back to the hotel to lunch; and in the afternoon Mrs. Bletchley saw the doctor, who gave her a prescription for spectacles, and said she had nothing to fear; and was charming to Leah and to Ida, who spoke French so well, and to the pretty and lively Mrs.

Gibson, who lost her heart to him and spoke the most preposterous French he had ever heard.

He was fond of pretty Englishwomen, the good German doctor, whatever French they spoke.

They were quite an hour there. Meanwhile Barty went to Beresford Duff's, and found Julia and Lady Jane drinking tea, as usual at that hour.

"Who are your uncommonly well-dressed friends, Barty?" said Mr. Duff. "I never met any of them that *I* can remember."

"Well—they're just from London—the elder lady is a Mrs. Bletchley."

"Not one of the Berkshire Bletchleys, eh?"

"Oh no—she's the widow of a London solicitor."

"Dear me! And the lovely, tall, black-eyed *damigella*—who's she?"

"She's a Miss Gibson, and her father's a furrier in Cheapside."

"And the pretty girl in blue with the fair hair?"

"She's the sister of a very old friend of mine, Robert Maurice—he's a wine merchant."

"You don't say so! Why, I took them for people of importance!" said Mr. Beresford Duff, who was a trifle old-fashioned in his ways of speech. "Anyhow, they're uncommonly nice to look at."

"Oh yes," said the not too priggishly grammatical Lady Jane; "nowadays those sort of people dress like duchesses, and think themselves as good as anyone."

"They're good enough for me, at all events," said Barty, who was not pleased.

"I'm sure Miss Gibson's good enough for *anybody in the world!*" said Julia. "She's the most beautiful girl I ever saw!" and she gave Barty a cup of tea.

Barty drank it and felt fond of Julia, and bade them all good-bye and went and waited in the hall of the König's Hotel for his friends, and took them back to Düsseldorf.

Next day the Gibsons started for their little trip up the Rhine, and Barty was left to his own reflections, and he reflected a great deal; not about what he meant to do himself, but about how he should tell Martia what he meant to do.

As for himself, his mind was thoroughly made up: he would break at once and for ever with a world he did not properly belong to, and fight his own little battle unaided, and be a painter—a good one, if he could. If not, so much the worse for him. Life is short.

When he would have settled his affairs and paid his small debts in Düsseldorf, he would have some ten or fifteen pounds to the good. He would go back to London with the Gibsons and Ida Maurice. There were no friends for him in the world like the Maurices. There was no woman for him in the world like Leah, whether she would ever care for him or not.

Rich or poor, he didn't mind! she was Leah: she had the hands, the feet, the lips, the hair, the eyes! That was enough for him! He

was absolutely sure of his own feelings; absolutely certain that his path was not only the pleasant path he liked, but the right one for a man in his position to follow: a thorny path indeed, but the thorns were the thorns of roses!

All this time he was busily rehearsing his part in the chorus of *Iphigenia*; he had applied for the post of second tenor chorister; the conditions were that he should be able to read music at sight. This he could not do, and his utter incapacity was tested at the Mahlcasten, before a crowd of artists, by the conductor. Barty failed signally, amid much laughter; and he impudently sang quite a little tune of his own, an improvisation.

The conductor laughed too; but Barty was admitted all the same; his voice was good, and he must learn his part by heart—that was all; anybody could teach him.

The Gibsons came back to Düsseldorf in time for the performance, which was admirable, in spite of Barty. From his coign of vantage, amongst the second tenors, he could see Julia's head with its golden fleece; Julia, that rose without a thorn—

“Het Roosje uit de dorne!”

She was sitting between Lady Jane and the Captain.

He looked in vain for the Gibsons, as he sang his loudest, yet couldn't hear himself sing (he was one of a chorus of avenging furies, I believe).

But there were three vacant seats in the same row as the Royces'. Presently three ladies, silken hooded and cloaked—one in yellow, one in pink, and one in blue—made their way to the empty places just as the chorus ceased, and sat down. Just then Orestes (Stockhausen) stood up and lifted his noble barytone—

“Die Ruhe kehret mir zurück.”

And the yellow-hooded lady unhooded a shapely little black head, and it was Leah's.

“*Prosit omen!*” thought Barty—and it seemed as if his whole heart melted within him.

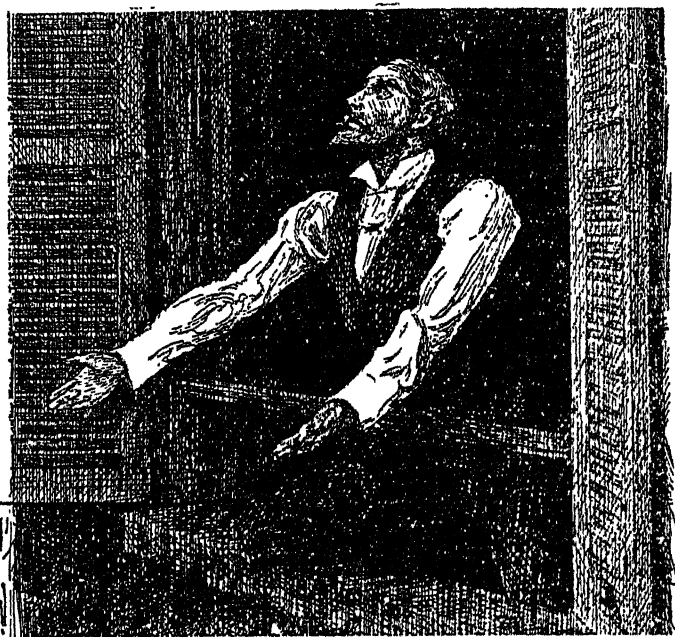
He could see that Leah and Julia often looked at each other; he could also see, during the intervals, how many double-barrelled opera-glasses were levelled at both; it was impossible to say which of these two lovely women was the loveliest; probably most votes would have been for Julia, the fair-haired one, the prima donna assoluta, the soprano, the Rowena, who always gets the biggest salary and most of the applause.

The brunette, the contralto, the Rebecca, dazzles less, but touches the heart all the more deeply, perhaps; anyhow, Barty had no doubt as to which of the two voices was the voice for him. His passion was as that of Brian de Bois-Guilbert for mere strength, except that he was bound by no vows of celibacy. There were no moonlit platonic about Barty's robust love, but all the chivalry and tenderness and

romance of a knight-errant underlay its vigorous complexity. He was a good knight, though not Sir Galahad!

Also he felt very patriotic, as a good knight should ever feel, and proud of a country which could grow such a rose as Julia, and such a lily as Leah Gibson.

Next to Julia sat Captain Reece, romantic and handsome as ever, with manly love and devotion expressed in every line of his face, every movement of his body; and the heaviest moustache and the



"MARTIA, I HAVE DONE MY BEST"

most beautiful brown whiskers in the world. He was either a hussar or a lancer; I forget which.

"By my halidom," mentally ejaculated Barty, "I sincerely wish thee joy and life-long happiness, good Sir Wilfred of Ivanhoe. Thou art a right fit mate for her, peerless as she may be among women! A benison on you both from your poor Wamba, the son of Witless."

As he went home that night, after the concert, to his tryst with Martia, the north came back to him—through the open window as it were, with the fireflies and fragrances, and the song of fifty night-ingales. It was for him a moment of deep and harassing emotion and keen anxiety. He leaned over the window sill and looked out on the starlit heavens, and whispered aloud the little speech he had prepared—

"Martia, I have done my best. I would make any sacrifice to obey

you, but I cannot give up my freedom to love the woman that attracts me as I have never been attracted before. I would sooner live a poor and unsuccessful struggler in the art I have chosen, with her to help me live, than be the mightiest man in England without her—even with Julia, whom I admire as much, and even more!

One can't help these things. They may be fancies, and one may live to repent them; but while they last they are imperious, not to be resisted. It's an instinct, I suppose; perhaps even a form of insanity! But I love Leah's little finger-nail better than Julia's lovely face and splendid body and all her thousands.

"Besides, I will not drag Julia down from her high position in the world's eye, even for a day, nor owe anything to either man or woman except love and fidelity! It grieves me deeply to disappoint you, though I cannot understand your motives. If you love me as you say you do, you ought to think of my happiness and honour before my worldly success and prosperity, about which I don't care a button, except for Leah's sake.

"Besides, I know myself better than you know me. I'm not one of those hard, strong, stern, purposeful, Napoleonic men, with wills of iron, that clever ambitious women conceive great passions for!

"I'm only a funny man"—a *gringalet-jocrisse*! And now that I'm quite grown up, and all my little funniments are over, I'm only fit to sit and paint, with my one eye, in my little corner, with a contented little wife, who won't want me to do great things and astonish the world. There's no place like home; faire la popotte ensemble au coin du feu—c'est le ciel!

"And if I'm half as clever as you say, it'll all come out in my painting and I shall be rich and famous, and all off my own bat. I'd sooner be Sir Edwin Landseer than Sir Robert Peel, or Pam, or Dizzy!

"Even to retain your love and protection and interest in me, which I value almost as much as I value life itself, I can't do as you wish. Don't desert me, Martia. I may be able to make it all up to you some day; after all, you can't foresee and command the future, nor can I. It wouldn't be worth living for if we could! It would all be discounted in advance!

"I may yet succeed in leading a useful, happy life; and that should be enough for you if it's enough for me, since I'm your be loved, and as you love me as your son. . . . Anyhow, my mind is made up for good and all, and. . ."

Here the sensation of the north suddenly left him, and he went to his bed with the sense of bereavement that had punished him all the preceding week: desperately sad, all but heart-broken, and feeling almost like a culprit, although his conscience, whatever that was worth, was thoroughly at ease, and his intent inflexible.

A day or two after this he must have received a note from Julia, making an appointment to meet him at the Ausstellung, in the Allee Strasse, a pretty little picture-gallery, since he was seen there sitting in deep conversation with Miss Royce in a corner, and both

seeming much moved; neither the Admiral nor Lady Jane was with them, and there was some gossip about it in the British colony both in Düsseldorf and Riffraath.

Barty, who of late years has talked to me so much, and with such affectionate admiration, of "Julia Countess," as he called her, never happened to have mentioned this interview; he was very reticent about his love-makings, especially about any love that was made to him.

I made so bold as to write to Julia, Lady Ironsides, and ask her if it were true they had met like this, and if I might print her answer, and received almost by return of post the following kind and characteristic letter:—

"96 GROSVENOR SQUARE.

"DEAR SIR ROBERT,—You're quite right; I did meet him, and and I've no objection whatever to telling you how it all happened—and you may do as you like.

"It happened just like this (you must remember that I was only just out, and had always had my own way in everything).

"Mamma and I and Uncle James (the Admiral), and Freddy Reece (Ironsides, you know), went to the Musik-fest in Düsseldorf. Barty was singing in the chorus. I saw him opening and shutting his mouth and could almost fancy I heard him, poor dear boy.

"Leah Gibson, as she was then, sat near to me, with her mother and your sister. Leah Gibson looked like—well, *you* know what she looked like in those days. By the way, I can't make out how it is you weren't over head and ears in love with her yourself! I thought her the loveliest girl I had ever seen, and felt very unhappy.

"We slept at the hotel that night, and on the way back to Riffraath next morning Freddy Reece proposed to me.

"I told him I couldn't marry him—but that I loved him as a sister, and all that; I really was very fond of him indeed, but I didn't want to marry him; I wanted to marry Barty, in fact; and make him rich and famous, as I felt sure he would be some day, whether I married him or not.

"But there was that lovely Leah Gibson, the furrier's daughter!

"When we got home to Riffraath mamma found she'd got a cold, and had a fancy for a French thing called a 'loch'; I think her cold was suddenly brought on by my refusing poor Freddy's offer!

"I went with Grissel, the maid (who knew about *lochs*), to the Riffraath chemist's, but he didn't even know what we meant—so I told mamma I would go and get a *loch* in Düsseldorf next day if she liked, with Uncle James. Mamma was only too delighted, for next day was Mr. Josselin's day for coming to Riffraath; but he didn't, for I wrote to him to meet me at twelve at a little picture-gallery I knew of in the Allee Strasse—as I wanted to have a talk with him.

"Uncle James had caught a cold too, so I went with Grissel; and found a chemist who'd been in France, and knew what a *loch* was and made one for me; and then I went to the gallery, and there was poor Barty sitting on a crimson velvet couch, under a picture of

Milton dictating *Paradise Lost* to his daughters (I bought it afterwards, and I've got it now).

"We said how d'ye do, and sat on the couch together, and I felt dreadfully nervous and ashamed.

"Then I said—

" 'You must think me very odd, Mr. Josselin, to ask you to meet me like this!'

" 'I think it's a very great honour!' he said; 'I only wish I deserved it.'



AM RHEIN

"LED WE NOT THERE A JOLLY LIFE
BETWIXT THE SUN AND SHADE?"

"And then he said nothing for quite five minutes, and I think he felt as uncomfortable as I did.

" 'Captain Graham-Reece has asked me to be his wife, and I refused,' I said.

" 'Why did you refuse? He's one of the best fellows I've ever met,' said Barty.

" 'He's to be so rich, and so am I,' I said.

No answer.

" 'It would be right for me to marry a *poor* man—man with brains and no money, you know, and help him to make his way.'

" 'Reece has plenty of brains too,' said Barty.

" 'O Mr. Josselin—don't misunderstand me'—and then I began to stammer and look foolish.

" 'Miss Royce—I've only got £15 in the world, and with that I mean to go to London and be an artist; and comfort myself during the struggle by the delightful remembrance of Riffra and Reece and yourself—and the happy hope of meeting you both again some day, when I shall no longer be the poor devil I am now, and am quite content to be! And when you and he are among the great of the earth, if you will give me each a commission to paint your portraits I will do my very best!' (and he smiled his irresistible smile). 'You will be kind, I am sure, to Mr. Nobody of Nowhere, the famous portrait-painter—who doesn't even bear his father's name—as he has no right to it.'

" 'I could have flung my arms round his neck and kissed him! What did I care about his father's name?

" 'Will you think me dreadfully bold and indiscreet, Mr. Josselin, if I—if I—' (I stammered fearfully.)

" 'If you *what*, Miss Royce?

" 'If I—if I ask you if you—if you—think Miss Gibson the most beautiful girl you ever saw?'

" 'Honestly, I think *you* the most beautiful girl I ever saw!'

" 'Oh, that's *nonsense*, Mr. Josselin, although I ought to have known you would say that! I'm not fit to tie her shoes. What I mean is—a—a—oh! forgive me—are you very *fond* of her, as I'm sure she deserves, you know?'

" 'Oh yes, Miss Royce, very fond of her indeed; she's poor, she's of no family, she's Miss Nobody of Nowhere, you know; she's all that I am, except that she has a right to her honest father's name——'

" 'Does she *know* you're very fond of her?'

" 'No; but I hope to tell her so some day.'

" 'Then we were silent, and I felt very red, and very much inclined to cry, but I managed to keep my tears.

" 'Then I got up, and so did he—and made some joke about Grissel and the loch-bottle; and we both laughed quite naturally and looked at the pictures, and he told me he was going back to London with the Gibsons that very week, and thanked me warmly for my kind interest in him, and assured me he thoroughly deserved it—and talked so funnily and so nicely that I quite forgave myself. I really don't think he guessed for one moment what I had been driving at all the while; I got back all my self-respect; I felt so grateful to him that I was fonder of him than ever, though no longer so idiotically in love. He was not for me. He had somehow laughed me into love with him, and laughed me out of it.

" 'Then I bade him good-bye, and squeezed his hand with all my heart, and told him how much I should like some day to meet Miss Gibson and be her friend if she would let me.

" 'Then I went back to Riffra and took mamma her loch; but she no longer wanted it, for I told her I had changed my mind about Freddy, and that cured her like magic; and she kissed me on both

cheeks and called me her dear, darling, divine Julia. Poor, sweet mamma!

"I had given her many a bad quarter of an hour, but this good moment made up for them all.

"She was eighty-two last birthday, and can still read Josselin's works in the cheap edition without spectacles—thanks, no doubt, to the famous Doctor Hasenclever! She reads nothing else!

"Et voilà comment ça s'est passé.



"DOES SHE KNOW YOU'RE VERY FOND OF HER?"

"It's I that'll be the proud woman when I read this letter, printed in your life of Josselin.—Yours sincerely,

"JULIA IRONSIDES.

"P.S.—I've actually just told mamma—and I'm still her dear, darling, divine Julia!"

Charming as were Barty's remembrances of Düsseldorf, the most charming of all was his remembrance of going aboard the little steamboat bound for Rotterdam, one night at the end of May, with old Mrs. Bletchley, Mrs. Gibson and her daughter, and my sister Ida.

The little boat was crowded; the ladies found what accommodation they could in what served for a ladies' cabin, and expostulated and bribed their best; fortunately for them, no doubt, there were no English on board to bribe against them.

Barty spent the night on deck, supine, with a carpet-bag for a pillow; we will take the full moon for granted. From Düsseldorf to Rotterdam there is little to see on either side of a Rhine steamboat, except the Rhine—especially at night.

Next day, after breakfast, he made the ladies as comfortable as he

could on the after-deck, and read to them from *Maud*, from the *Idylls of the King*, from the *Mill on the Floss*. Then windmills came into sight—Dutch windmills; then Rotterdam, almost too soon. They went to the big hotel on the Boompjes and fed, and then explored Rotterdam, and found it a most delightful city.

Next day they got on board the steamboat bound for St. Katharine's wharf; the wind had freshened and they soon separated, and met at breakfast next morning in the Thames.

Barty declared he smelt Great Britain as distinctly as one can smell a Scotch haggis, or a Welsh rabbit, or an Irish stew, and the old familiar smell made him glad. However little you may be English, if you are English at all you are more English than anything else, *et plus royaliste que le Roi!*

According to Heine, an Englishman loves liberty as a good husband loves his wife; that is also how he loves the land of his birth; at all events, England has a kind of wifely embrace for the homecoming Briton, especially if he comes home by the Thames.

It is not unexpected, nor madly exciting, perhaps; but it is singularly warm and sweet if the conjugal relations have not been strained in the meanwhile. And as the Thames narrows itself, the closer, the more genial, the more grateful and comforting this long-anticipated and tenderly intimate uxorious dalliance seems to grow.

Barty felt very happy as he stood leaning over the bulwarks in the sunshine, between Ida and Leah, and looked at Rotherhithe, and promised himself he would paint it some day, and even sell the picture!

Then he made himself so pleasant to the custom-house officers that they all but forgot to examine the Gibson luggage.

Was I delighted to grasp his hand at St. Katharine's wharf, after so many months! Ah! . . .

Mr. Gibson was there, funny as ever, and the Gibsons went home with him to Conduit Street in a hired fly. Alas! poor Mrs. Gibson's home-coming was the saddest part for her of the delightful little journey.

And Barty and Ida and I went our own way in a four-wheeler to eat the fatted calf in Brunswick Square, washed down with I will not say what vintage. There were so many available from all the wine-growing lands of Europe that I've forgotten which was chosen to celebrate the wanderers' return!

Let us say Romané-Conti, which is the "cru" that Barty loved best.

Next morning Barty left us early, with a portfolio of sketches under his arm, and his heart full of sanguine expectation, and spent the day in Fleet Street, or thereabouts, calling on publishers of illustrated books and periodicals, and came back to us at dinner-time very fagged, and with a long and piteous but very droll story of his ignominious non-success: his weary waitings in dull, dingy, little business back rooms, the patronising and snubbing he and his works had

met with, the sense that he had everything to learn—he, who thought he was going to take the publishing world by storm.

Next day it was just the same, and the day after, and the day after that—every day of the week he spent under our roof.

Then he insisted on leaving us, and took for himself a room in Newman Street—a studio by day, a bedroom by night, a pleasant smoking-room at all hours, and very soon a place of rendez-vous for all sorts and conditions of jolly fellows, old friends and new, from Guardsmen to young stars of the art world, mostly idle apprentices.

Gradually boxing-gloves crept in, and foils and masks, and the faithful Snowdrop (whose condition three or four attacks of delirium tremens during Barty's exile had not improved).

And fellows who sang, and told good stories, and imitated popular actors—all as it used to be in the good old days of St. James's Street.

But Barty was changed all the same. These amusements were no longer the serious business of life for him. In the midst of all the racket he would sit at his small easel and work. He declared he couldn't find inspiration in silence and solitude, and, bereft of Martia, he could not bear to be alone.

Then he looked up other old friends, and left cards and got invitations to dinners and drums. One of his first visits was to his old tailor in Jermyn Street, to whom he still owed money, and who welcomed him with open arms—almost hugged him—and made him two or three beautiful suits; I believe he would have dressed Barty for nothing, as a mere advertisement. At all events, he wouldn't hear of payment "for many years to come! The finest figure in the whole Household Brigade!—the idea!"

Soon Barty got a few sketches into obscure illustrated papers, and thought his fortune was made. The first was a little sketch in the manner of John Leech, which he took to the *British Lion*, just started as a rival to *Punch*. The *British Lion* died before the sketch appeared, but he got a guinea for it, and bought a beautiful volume of Tennyson, illustrated by Millais, Holman Hunt, Rossetti, and others, and made a sketch on the fly-leaf of a lovely female with black hair and black eyes, and gave it to Leah Gibson. It was his old female face of ten years ago; yet, strange to say, the very image of Leah herself (as it had once been that of his mother).

The great happiness of his life just then was to go to the opera with Mrs. Gibson and Leah and Mr. Babbage (the family friend), who could get a box whenever he liked, and then to sup with them afterwards in Conduit Street, over the Eporium of the "Universal Fur Company," and to imitate Signor Giuglini for the delectation of Mr. Gibson, whose fondness for Barty soon grew into absolute worship!

And Leah, so reserved and self-contained in general company, would laugh till the tears ran down her cheeks; and the music of her laughter, which was deep and low, rang more agreeably to Barty's ear than even the ravishing strains of Adelina Patti—the last of the

great prime donne of our time, I think—whose voice still stirs me to the depths, with vague remembrance of fresh girlish innocence turned into sound.

Long life to her and to her voice! Lovely voices should never fade, nor pretty faces either!

Sometimes I replaced Mr. Babbage and escorted Mrs. Gibson to the opera, leaving Leah to Barty; for on fine nights we walked there, and the ladies took off their bonnets and shawls in the box, which was generally on the upper tier, and we looked down on Scatcherd and my mother and sister in the stalls. Then back to Conduit Street to supper. It was easy with half an eye to see the way things were going. I can't say I liked it. No man would, I suppose. But I reconciled myself to the inevitable, and bore up like a stoic.

L'amitié est l'amour sans ailes! A happy intimate friendship, a wingless love that has lasted more than thirty years without a break, is no bad substitute for tumultuous passions that have missed their mark! I have been as close a friend to Barty's wife as to Barty himself, and all the happiness I have ever known has come from them and theirs.

Walking home, poor Mrs. Gibson would confide to me her woes and anxieties, and wail over the past glories of Tavistock Square and all the nice people who lived there, and in Russell Square and Bedford Street and Gower Street, many of whom had given up calling on her now that she lived over a shop. Not all the liveliness of Bond Street and Regent Street combined (which Conduit Street so broadly and genially connected with each other) could compensate her for the lost gentility, the aristocratic dulness and quiet and repose, "almost equal to that of a West End Square."

Then she believed that business was not going on well, since Mr. Gibson talked of giving up his Cheapside establishment; he said it was too much for him to look after. But he had lost much of his fun, and seemed harassed and thin, and muttered in his sleep; and the poor woman was full of forebodings, some of which were to be justified by events that followed.

About this time Leah, who had forebodings too, took it into her head to attend a class for book-keeping, and in a short time thoroughly mastered the science in all its details. I'm afraid she was better in this kind of work than at either drawing or music, both of which she had been so perseveringly taught. She could read off any music at sight quite glibly and easily, it is true—the result of hard plodding—but could never play to give real pleasure, and she gave it up. And with singing it was the same; her voice was excellent and had been well trained, but when she heard the untaught Barty she felt she was no singer, and never would be, and left off trying. Yet nobody got more pleasure out of the singing of others—especially Barty's and that of young Mr. Santley, who was her pet and darling, and whom she far preferred to that sweetest and suavest of tenors, Giuglini, about whom we all went mad. I agreed with her. Giuglini's voice was like

green chartreuse in a liqueur-glass; Santley's like a bumper of the very best burgundy that ever was! Oh that high G! Romané-Conti, again; and in a quart pot! En veux-tu? en voilà!

And as for her drawing, it was as that of all intelligent young ladies who have been well taught, but have no original talent whatever; nor did she derive any special pleasure from the masterpieces in the National Gallery; the Royal Academy was far more to her taste; and to mine, I frankly admit; and, I fear, to Barty's taste also, in those days. Enough of the Guardsman still remained in him to quite unfit his brain and ear and eye for what was best in literature and art. He was mildly fond of the "Bacchus and Ariadne," and Rembrandt's portrait of himself, and a few others; as he was of the works of Shakespeare and Milton. But Mantegna and Botticelli and Signorelli made him sad, and almost morose.

The only great things he genuinely loved and revered were the Elgin Marbles. He was constantly sketching them. And I am told that they have had great influence on his work, and that he owes much to them. I have grown to admire them immensely myself in consequence, though I used to find that part of the British Museum a rather dreary lounge in the days when Barty used to draw there.

I am the proud possessor of a Velasquez, two Titians, and a Rembrandt; but, as a rule, I like to encourage the art of my own time and country and that of modern France.

And I suppose there's hardly a great painter living, or recently dead, some of whose work is not represented on my walls, either in London, Paris, or Scotland; or at Marsfield, where so much of my time is spent; although the house is not mine, it's my real home; and thither I have always been allowed to send my best pictures, and my best bric-à-brac, my favourite horses and dogs, and the oldest and choicest liquors that were ever stored in the cellars of Vougeot-Conti & Co. Old bachelor friends have their privileges, and Uncle Bob has known how to make himself at home in Marsfield.

Barty soon got better off, and moved into better lodgings in Berners Street; a sitting room and bedroom at No. 12B, which has now disappeared.

And there he worked all day, without haste and without rest, and at last in solitude; and found he could work twice as well with no companion but his pipe and his lay figure, from which he made most elaborate studies of drapery in pen and ink; first in the manner of Sandys and Albert Dürer! later in the manner of Millais, Walker, and Keene.

Also he acquired the art of using the living model for his little illustrations. It had become the fashion; a new school had been founded with *Once a Week* and the *Cornhill Magazine*, it seems; besides those already named, there were Lawless, du Maurier, Poynter, not to mention Holman Hunt and F. Leighton; and a host of new draughtsmen, most industrious apprentices, whose talk and example soon weaned Barty from a mixed and somewhat rowdy crew.

And all became more or less friends of his; a very good thing, for they were admirable in industry and talent, thorough artists and very good fellows all round. Need I say they have all risen to fame and fortune—as becomes poetical justice?

He also kept in touch with his old brother officers, and that was a good thing too.

But there were others he got to know, rickety, unwholesome geniuses, whose genius (such as it was) had allied itself to madness; and who were just as conceited about the madness as about the genius, and took more pains to cultivate it. It brought them a quicker kudos, and was so much more visible to the naked eye.

At first Barty was fascinated by the madness, and took the genius on trust, I suppose. They made much of him, painted him, wrote music and verses about him, raved about his Greekness, his beauty, his yellow hair, and his voice and what not, as if he had been a woman. He even stood that, he admired them so! or rather, this genius of theirs.

He introduced me to this little clique, who called themselves a school, and each other "master": "the neo-priapists," or something of that sort, and they worshipped the tuberosc.

They disliked me at sight, and I them, and we did not dissemble!

Like Barty, I am fond of men's society; but at least I like them to be unmistakably men of my own sex, manly men, and clean; not little misshapen troglodytes with foul minds and perverted passions, or self-advertising little mountebanks with enlarged and diseased vanities; creatures who stand in a pillory sooner than not be stared at or talked about at all.

Whatever their genius might be, it almost made me sick—it almost made me kick, to see the humouros and masculine Barty prostrate in admiration before these inspired epicenes, these gifted epileptoids, these anæmic little self-satisfied nincompoops, whose proper place, it seemed to me, was either Earlswood, or Colney Hatch, or Broadmoor. That is, if their madness was genuine, which I doubt. He and I had many a quarrel about them, till he found them out and cut them for good and all—a great relief to me; for one got a bad name by being friends with such nondescripts.

"Dis-moi qui tu hantes, je te dirai ce que tu es!"

Need I say they all died long ago, without leaving the ghost of a name?—and nobody cared. Poetical justice again! How encouraging it is to think there are no such people now, and that the breed has been thoroughly stamped out!¹

Barty never succeeded as an illustrator on wood. He got into a way of doing very slight sketches of pretty people in fancy dress and colouring them lightly, and sold them at a shop in the Strand, now no more. Then he made up little stories, which he illustrated himself, something like the picture-books of the later Caldecott, and I found him a publisher, and he was soon able to put aside a few pounds and pay his debts.

¹ Editor.

PART EIGHTH

"And now I see with eyes serene
The very pulse of the machine;
A being breathing thoughtful breath,
A traveller betwixt life and death;
The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill;
A perfect woman, nobly planned
To warn and comfort and command;
And yet a spirit too and bright
With something of an angel-light."

—WORDSWORTH.

WHEN Barty had been six months in England, poor Mr. Gibson's affairs went suddenly smash. My father saved him from absolute bankruptcy, and there was lamentation and wailing for a month or so in Conduit Street; but things were so managed that Mr. Gibson was able to keep on the "West End firm," and make with it a new start.

He had long been complaining of his cashier, and had to dismiss him and look out for another; but here his daughter came in and insisted on being cashier herself—(to her mother's horror).

So she took her place at a railed-in desk at the back of the shop, and was not only cashier and bookkeeper, but overseer of all things in general, and was not above seeing any exacting and importunate customer whom the shopmen couldn't manage.

She actually liked her work, and declared she had found her real vocation, and quite ceased to regret Tavistock Square.

Her authority in the emporium was even greater than her father's, who was too fond of being funny. She awed the shopmen into a kind of affectionate servility, and they were prostrate as before a goddess, in spite of her never-failing politeness to them.

Customers soon got into a way of asking to see Miss Gibson, especially when they were accompanied by husbands or brothers or male friends; and Miss Gibson soon found she sold better than any shopman, and became one of the notables in the quarter.

All Mr. Gibson's fun came back, and he was as proud of his daughter as if she'd been proposed to by an earl. But Mrs. Gibson couldn't help shedding tears over Leah's loss of caste—Leah, on whose beauty and good-breeding she had founded such hopes; it is but fair to add that she was most anxious to keep the books herself, so that her daughter might be spared this degradation; for no "gentleman," she felt sure, would ever propose to her daughter now.

But she was mistaken.

One night Barty and I dined at a little cagmag he used to frequent, where he fared so well—so he said—for a shilling, which included a glass of stout. It was a disgusting little place, but he liked it, and therefore so did I.

Then we called for Mrs. Gibson and Leah, and took them to the Princess's to see Fechter in *Ruy Blas*, and escorted them home, and had supper with them, a very good supper—nothing ever interfered with the luxuriously hospitable instincts of the Gibsons—and a very merry one. Barty imitated Fechter to the life.

"I 'av ze garrb of a *lacquais*—you 'av ze sôle of *wawn*!"

This he said to Mr. Gibson, who was in fits of delight. Mr. Gibson had just come home from his club, and the cards had been propitious; Leah was more reserved than usual, and didn't laugh at Barty, for a wonder, but gazed at him with love in her eyes.

When we left them, Barty took my arm and walked home with me, down Oxford Street and up Southampton Row, and talked of *Ruy Blas* and Fechter, whom he had often seen in Paris.

Just where a little footway leads from the Row to Queen Square and Great Ormond Street, he stopped and said—

"Bob, do you remember how we tossed up for Leah Gibson at this very spot?"

"I should think I did," said I.

"Well, you had a fair field and no favour, old boy, didn't you?"

"Oh, yes, I've long resigned any pretensions, as I wrote you more than a year ago; you may go in and win—*si le cœur t'en dit*!"

"Well, then, your congratulations, please. I asked her to marry me as we crossed Regent Circus, Oxford Street, on the way home; a hansom came by and scattered and splashed us. Then we came together again, and just opposite Peter Robinson's, she asked me if my mind was quite made up—if I was sure I wouldn't ever change. I swore by the eternal gods, and she said she would be my wife; so there we are, an engaged couple."

I must ask the reader to believe I was equal to the occasion, and said what I ought to have said.

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Mrs. Gibson was happy at last; she was satisfied that Barty was a "gentleman," in spite of the kink in his birth; and as for his prospects, money was a thing that never entered Mrs. Gibson's head, and she loved Barty as a son—was a little bit in love with him herself, I believe; she was not yet forty, and as pretty as she could be.

Besides, a week after, who should call upon her over the shop—there was a private entrance of course—but the Right Honourable Lady Caroline Grey and her niece, Miss Daphne Rohan, granddaughter of the late and niece of the present Marquis of Whitby!

And Mrs. Gibson felt as much at home with them in five minutes as if she'd known them all her life.

Leah was summoned from below, and kissed and congratulated by the two aristocratic relatives of Barty's, and relieved of her shyness in a very short time indeed.

As a matter of fact, Lady Caroline, who knew her nephew well, and thoroughly understood his position, was really well pleased; she

had never forgotten her impression of Leah when she met her in the park with Ida and me a year back, and we all walked by the Serpentine together—a certain kind of beauty seems to break down all barriers of rank; and she knew Leah's character both from Barty and me, and from her own native shrewdness of observation. She had been delighted to hear from Barty of Leah's resolute participation in her father's troubles, and in his attempt—so successful through her—to rehabilitate his business. To her old-fashioned aristocratic way of looking at things, there was little to choose between a respectable West End shopkeeper and a medical practitioner or dentist or solicitor or architect—or even artist, like Barty himself. Once outside



"LEAH WAS SUMMONED FROM BELOW"

the Church, the Army and Navy, or a Government office, what on earth did it matter *who* or *what* one was, or wasn't? The only thing she couldn't stand was that horrid form of bourgeois gentility, the pretension to seem something better than you really are. Mrs. Gibson was so naïvely honest in her little laments over her lost grandeur that she could hardly be called vulgar about it.

Mr. Gibson didn't appear; he was overawed, and distrusted himself. I doubt if Lady Caroline would have liked anything in the shape of jocose familiarity; and I fear her naturalness and simplicity and cordiality of manner, and the extreme plainness of her attire, might have put him at ease almost a trifle too much.

Whether her ladyship would have been so sympathetic about this engagement if Barty had been a legitimate Rohan—say a son of her own

—is perhaps to be doubted; but anyhow she had quite made up her mind that Leah was a quite exceptional person, both in mind and manners. She has often said as much to me, and has always had as high a regard for Barty's wife as for any woman she knows, and has still—the Rohans are a long-lived family. She has often told me she never knew a better, sincerer, nobler, or more sensible woman than Barty's wife.

Besides which, as I have been told, the ancient Yorkshire house of Rohan has always been singularly free from aristocratic hauteur; perhaps their religion may have accounted for this, and also their poverty.

This memorable visit, it must be remembered, happened nearly forty years ago, when social demarcations in England were far more rigidly defined than at present; then, the wife of a costermonger with a donkey did not visit the wife of a costermonger who had to wheel his barrow himself.

We are more sensible in these days, as all who like Mr. Chevalier's admirable coster-songs are aware. Old Europe itself has become less tolerant of distinctions of rank; even Austria is becoming so. It is only in south-eastern Bulgaria—and even of this I am not absolutely sure—that the navvy who happens to be of noble birth refuses to work in the same gang with the navvy who isn't; and that's what I call real "*esprit de corps*," without which no aristocracy can ever hope to hold its own in these degenerate days.

Noblesse oblige!

Why, I've got a Lord Arthur in my New York agency, and two Hon'bles in Barge Yard, and another at Cape Town; and devilish good men of business they are, besides being good fellows all round. They hope to become partners some day; and, by Jove! they shall. Now I've said it, I'll stick to it.

The fact is, I'm rather fond of noble lords: why shouldn't I be? I might have been one myself any day these last ten years; I might now, if I chose; but there! Charles Lamb knew a man who wanted to be a tailor once, but hadn't got the spirit. I find I haven't got the spirit to be a noble lord. Even Barty might have been a lord—he, a mere man of letters!—but he refused every honour and distinction that was ever offered to him, either here or abroad—even the Prussian Order of Merit!

Alfred Tennyson was a lord, so what is there to make a fuss about? Give me lords who can't help themselves, because they were born so, and the stupider the better; and the older—for the older they are, the grander their manners and the manners of their womankind.

Take, for instance, that splendid old dow, Penelope, Duchess of Rumtifoosleland—I always give nicknames to my grand acquaintances; not that she's particularly old herself, but she belongs to an antiquated order of things that is passing away—for she was a Fitztartan, a daughter of the ducal house of Comtesbois (pronounced County Boyce); and she's very handsome still.

Have you ever been presented to her Grace, O reader?

If so, you must have been struck by the grace of her Grace's manner, as with a ducal gesture and a few courtly words she recognises the value of whatever immense achievements yours must have been to have procured you such an honour as such an introduction, and expresses her surprise and regret that she has not known you before. The formula is always the same, on every possible occasion. I ought to know, for I've had the honour of being presented to her Grace seven times this year.

Now this lofty forgetting of your poor existence—or mine—is not aristocratic hauteur or patrician insolence; it is *bêtise pure et simple*, as they call it in France. She was a daughter of the house of Comtebois, and the Fitztartans were not the inventors of gunpowder, nor was she.

But for a stately, magnificent Grande Dame of the ancient régime, to meet for the seventh time, and be presented to—for the seventh time—with all due ceremony in the midst of a distinguished conservative crowd—say at a ball at Buckingham Palace—give me Penelope, Dowager Duchess of Rumtifoosleland!

(This seems a somewhat uncalled-for digression. But, anyhow, it shows that when it pleases me to do so I move in the very best society—just like Barty Josselin.)

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So here was Mr. Nobody of Nowhere taking unto himself a wife from among the daughters of Heth; from the class he had always disliked, the buyers cheap and the sellers dear—whose aim in life is the making of money, and who are proud when they succeed and ashamed when they fail—and getting actually fond of his future mother in law, as I was!

When I laughed to him about old Gibson—John Gilpin, as we used to call him—being a tradesman, he said—

"Yes; but what an *unsuccessful* tradesman, my dear fellow!" as if that in itself atoned or made amends for everything.

"Besides, he's Leah's father! And as for Mrs. Gilpin, she's a *dear*, although she's always on pleasure bent; at all events, she's not of frugal mind; and she's so pretty and dresses so well—and what a foot!—and she's got such easy manners, too; she reminds me of dear Lady Archibald! that's a mother-in-law I shall get on with . . . I wish she didn't make so much fuss about living over the shop; I call that being above one's business in every way."

"Je suis au-dessus de mes affaires," as old Bonzig proudly said when he took a garret over the Mont de Piété, in the Rue des Averses.

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Barty's courtship didn't last long—only five or six months—during which he made lots of money by sketching little full-length portraits of people in outline and filling up with tints in water-colour. He thus immortalised my father and mother, and Ida Scatcherd and her husband, and the old Scatcherds, and lots of other

people. It was not high art, I suppose; he was not a high artist; but it paid well, and made him more tolerant of trade than ever.

He took the upper part of a house in Southampton Row, and furnished it almost entirely with wedding-gifts; among other things, a beautiful semi-grand piano by Érard—the gift of my father. Everything was charming there and in the best taste.

Leah was better at furnishing a house than at drawing and music-making; it was an occupation she revelled in.

It is not for me to say that their cellar might hold its own with that of any beginners in their rank of life!

Well, and so they were married at Marylebone Church, and I was Barty's best man (he was to have been mine, and for that very bride). Nobody else was there but the family, and Ida, whose husband was abroad; the sun shone, though it was not yet May—and then we breakfasted; and John Gilpin made a very funny speech, though with tears in his voice; and as for poor Maman-belle-mère, as Barty called her, she was a very Niobe.

They were for a fortnight to Boulogne. I wished them joy from the bottom of my heart, and flung a charming little white satin slipper of Mrs. Gibson's; it alighted on the carriage—*our* carriage, by-the-way; we had just started one, and now lived at Lancaster Gate.

It was a sharp pang—almost unbearable, but, also, almost the last. The last was when she came back and I saw how radiant she looked. And as for Barty, he was like

“the herald Mercury,
New lighted on a heaven-kissing hill!”

and he had shaved off his beard and moustache to please his wife.

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“From GEORGE DU MAURIER, Esqre., A.R.W.S., Hampstead Heath, to the Right Honble. Sir ROBERT MAURICE, Bart., M.P.

“MY DEAR MAURICE,—In answer to your kind letter, I shall be proud and happy to illustrate your biography of Barty Josselin; but as for editing it, *vous plaisantez, mon ami; un amateur comme moi!* who'll edit the editor? *Quis custodiet?* . . .

“You're mistaken about Malines. I only got back there a week or two before he left it. I remember often seeing him there, arm in arm with his aunt, Lady Caroline Grey, and being told he was a *monsieur anglais, qui avait mal aux yeux* (like me); but in Düsseldorf, during the following winter, I knew him very well indeed.

“We, and the others you tell me you mention, had a capital time in Düsseldorf. I remember the beautiful Miss Royce they were all so mad about, and also Miss Gibson, whom I admired much the most of the two, although she wasn't quite so tall—you know my craze for lovely giantesses.

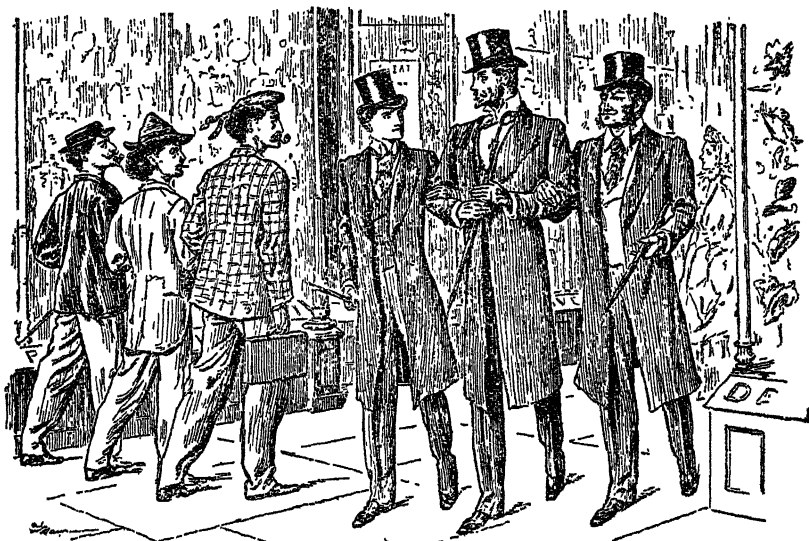
“Josselin and I came to London at about the same time, and there again I saw much of him, and was immensely attracted by him, of course—as we all were, in the very pleasant little artistic

clique you tell me you describe; but somehow I was never very intimate with him—none of us were, except, perhaps, Charles Keene.

"He went a great deal into smart society, and a little of the Guardsman still clung to him, and this was an unpardonable crime in those Bohemian days.

"He was once seen walking between two well-known earls, in the Burlington Arcade, arm in arm!

"Z—— (to whom a noble lord was as a red rag to a bull) all but cut him for this, and we none of us approved of his swell friends, Guardsmen and others. Now we've all changed, especially Z——,



"BETWEEN TWO WELL-KNOWN EARLS"

who hasn't missed a levée for twenty years, nor his wife a drawing-room!

"Josselin and I acted in a little French musical farce together at Cornelys's; he had a charming voice and sang beautifully, as you know.

"Then he married, and a year after I did the same; and though we lived near each other for a little while, we didn't meet very often, beyond dining together once or twice at each other's houses. They lived very much in the world.

"It will be very difficult to draw his wife. I really think Mrs. Josselin was the most beautiful woman I ever saw; but she used to be very reserved in those early days, and I never felt quite at my ease with her. I'm sure she was sweetness and kindness itself; she was certainly charming at her own dinner-table, where she was less shy.

"Millais's portrait of her is very good, and so is Watts's; but the best idea of her is to got from Josselin's little outlines in 'The

Discreet Princess,' and these are out of print. If you have any, please lend them to me, and I will faithfully return them. I have more than once tried to draw her in *Punch*, from memory, but never with success.

"I used to call her '*La belle dame sans merci*.'

"I've often, however, drawn Josselin, as you must remember, and people have recognised him at once. Thanks for all his old sketches of school, &c., which will be very useful.

"I wish I had known the Josselins better. But when one lives in Hampstead one has to forego many delightful friendships; and then he grew to be such a tremendous swell! Good heavens!—*Sardonys*, &c. I never could muster courage even to write and congratulate him.

"It never occurred to any of us, either in Düsseldorf or London, to think him what is called *clever*; he never said anything very witty or profound. But he was always funny in a good-natured, jovial manner, and made me laugh more than any one else.

"As for satire, good heavens! that seemed not in him. He was always well dressed, always in high spirits and a good temper, and very demonstrative and caressing; putting his arm round one, and slapping one on the back or lifting one up in the air; a kind of jolly, noisy, boisterous boon-companion—rather uproarious, in fact, and with no disdain for a good bottle of wine or a good bottle of beer. His artistic tastes were very catholic, for he was prostrate in admiration before Millais, Burne-Jones, Fred Walker, and Charles Keene, with the latter of whom he used to sing old English ducts. Oddly enough, Charles Keene had for Josselin's little amateur pencillings the most enthusiastic admiration—probably because they were the very antipodes of his own splendid work. I believe he managed to get some little initial letters of Josselin's into *Punch* and *Once a Week*; but they weren't signed, and made no mark, and I've forgotten them.

"Josselin didn't really get his foot in the stirrup till a year or two after his marriage.

"And that was by his illustrations to his own *Sardonys*, which are almost worthy of the letterpress. I think; though still somewhat lacking in freedom and looseness, and especially in the sense of tone. The feeling for beauty and character in them (especially that of women and children) is so utterly beyond anything else of the kind that has ever been attempted, that technical considerations no longer count. I think you will find all of us, in or outside the Academy, agreed upon this point.

"I saw very little of him after he bought Marsfield; but I sometimes meet his sons and daughters, *de par le monde*.

"And what a pleasure that is to an artist of my particular bent you can readily understand. I would go a good way to see or talk to any daughter of Josselin's; and to hear Mrs. Trevor sing, what miles! I'm told the grandchildren are splendid—chips of the old block too.

"And now, my dear Maurice, I will do my best; you may count upon that, for old-times' sake, and for Josselin's and for that of '*La belle dame sans merci*,' whom I used to admire so enthusiastically. It grieves me deeply to think of them both gone—and all so sudden!—Sincerely yours,

"GEORGE DU MAURIER.

"P.S.—Very many thanks for the Château Yquem and the Steinberger Cabinet; *je tâcherai de ne pas en abuser trop!*

"I send you a little sketch of Graham-Reece (Lord Ironsides), taken by me on a little bridge in Düsseldorf, near Düsseldorf. He stood for me there in 1860. It was thought very like at the time."

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When the Josselins came back from their honeymoon, and were settled in Southampton Row, many people of all kinds called on the newly-married pair; invitations came pouring in, and they went very much into the world. They were considered the handsomest couple in London that year, and became quite the fashion, and were asked everywhere, and made much of, and raved about, and had a glorious time till the following season, when somebody else became the fashion, and they had grown tired of being lionised themselves, and discovered they were people of no social importance whatever, as Leah had long perceived; and it did them good.

Barty was in his element. The admiration his wife excited filled him with delight; it was a kind of reflected glory, that pleased him more than any glory he could possibly achieve for himself.

I doubt if Leah was quite so happy. The grand people, the famous people, the clever, worldly people she met made her very shy at first, as may be easily imagined.

She was rather embarrassed by the attentions many smart men paid her as to a very pretty woman, and not always pleased or edified. Her deep sense of humour was often tickled by this new position in which she found herself, and which she put down entirely to the fact that she was Barty's wife.

She never thought much of her own beauty, which had never been made much of at home, where beauty of a very different order was admired, and where she was thought too tall, too pale, too slim, and especially too quiet and sedate.

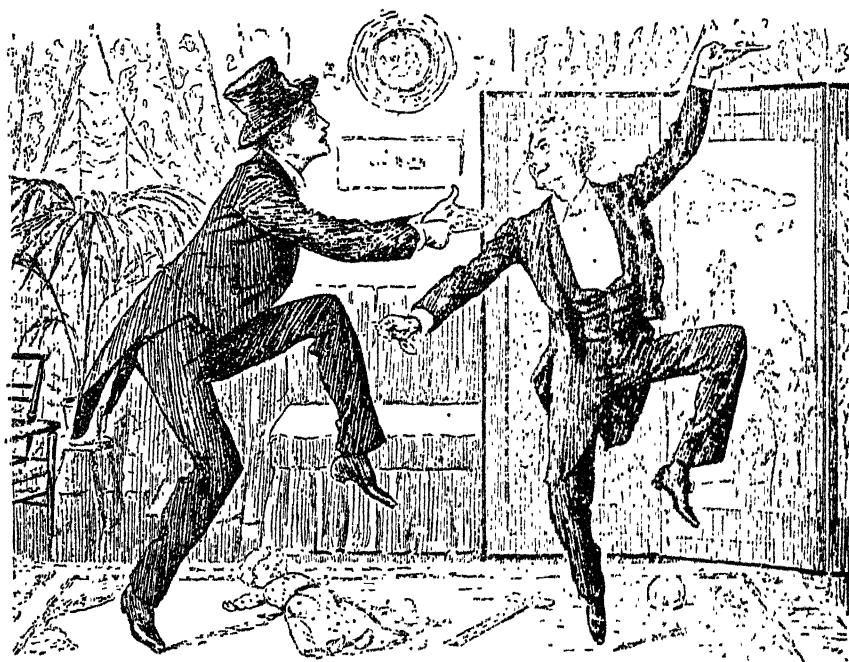
Dimpled little rosy plumpness for Mr. and Mrs. John Gilpin, and the never-ending lively chatter, and the ever-ready laugh that results from an entire lack of the real sense of humour and a laudable desire to show ones' pretty teeth.

Leah's only vanity was her fondness for being very well dressed; it had become a second nature, especially her fondness for beautiful French boots and shoes, an instinct inherited from her mother.

For these, and for pretty furniture and hangings, she had the truly æsthetic eye, and was in advance of her time by at least a year.

She shone most in her own home—by her great faculty of making others at home there, too, and disinclined to leave it. Her instinct of hospitality was a true inheritance; she was good at the ordering of all such things—food, wines, flowers, waiting, every little detail of the dinner-table, and especially who should be asked to meet whom, and which particular guests should be chosen to sit by each other. All things of which Barty had no idea whatever.

I remember their first dinner-party well, and how pleasant it was. How good the fare, and how simple; and how quick the hired waiting—and the wines! how—(but I won't talk of that); and how



"LE DERNIER DES ABENCERRAGES"

lively we all were and how handsome the women. Lady Caroline and Miss Daphne Rohan, Mr. and Mrs. Graham-Reece, Scatcherd and my sister; G. du Maurier (then a bachelor) and myself—that was the party, a very lively one.

After dinner du Maurier and Barty sang capital songs of the quartier latin, and told stories of the atelier, and even danced a kind of cancan together—an invention of their own—which they called "*le dernier des Abencerrages*." We were in fits of laughter, especially Lady Caroline and Mrs. Graham-Reece. I hope D. M. has not forgotten that scene, and will do justice to it in this book.

There was still more of the Bohemian than the Guardsman left in Barty, and his wife's natural tastes were far more in the direction

of Bohemia than of fashionable West End society, as it was called by some people who were not in it, whatever it consists of; there was more of her father in her than her mother, and she was not sensitive to the world's opinion of her social status.

Sometimes Leah and Barty and I would dine together and go to the gallery of the opera, let us say, or to see Fechter and Miss Kate Terry in the *Duke's Motto*, or Robson in *Shylock*, or the *Porter's Knot*, or whatever was good. Then on the way home to Southampton Row Barty would buy a big lobster, and Leah would make a salad of it, with innovations of her own devising which were much appreciated; and then we would feast, and afterwards Leah would muli some claret in a silver saucepan, and then we (Barty and I) would drink and smoke and chat of pleasant things till it was very late indeed, and I had to be turned out neck and crop.

And the kindness of the two dear people! Once, when my father and mother were away in the Isle of Wight and the Scatcherds in Paris, I felt so seedy I had to leave Barge Yard and go home to Lancaster Gate. I had felt pretty bad for two or three days. Like all people who are never ill, I was nervous and thought I was going to die, and sent for Barty.

In less than twenty minutes Leah drove up in a hansom. Barty was in Hampton Court for the day, sketching. When she had seen me and how ill I looked, off she went for a doctor, and brought him back with her in no time. He saw I was sickening for typhoid, and must go to bed at once and engage two nurses.

Leah insisted on taking me straight off to Southampton Row, and the doctor came with us. There I was soon in bed and the nurses engaged, and everything done for me as if I'd been Barty himself—all this at considerable inconvenience to the Josselins.

And I had my typhoid most pleasantly. And I shall never forget the joys of convalescence, nor what an angel that woman was in a sick-room—nor what a companion when the worst was over; nor how she so bore herself through all this forced intimacy that no unruly regrets or jealousies mingled in my deep affection and admiration for her, and my passionate gratitude. She was such a person to tell all one's affairs to, even dry business affairs! such a listener, and said such sensible things, and sometimes made suggestions that were invaluable; and of a discretion! a very tomb for momentous secrets.

How on earth Barty would have ever managed to get through existence without her is not to be conceived. Upon my word, I hardly see how I should have got on myself without these two people to fill my life with; and in all matters of real importance to me she was the nearest of the two, for Barty was so light about things, and couldn't listen long to anything that was at all intricate. Such matters bored him, and that extraordinary good sense which underlies all his brilliant criticism of life was apt to fail him in practical matters; he was too headstrong and impulsive, and by no means discreet.

It was quite amusing to watch the way his wife managed him without ever letting him suspect what she was doing, and how, after his raging and fuming and storming and stamping—for all his old fractiousness had come back—she would gradually make him work his way round—of his own accord, as he thought—to complete concession all along the line, and take great credit to himself in consequence; and she would very gravely and slowly give way to a delicate little wink in my direction, but never a smile at what was all so really funny, I've no doubt she often got me to do what she thought right in just the same way—*à mon insu*—and shot her little wink at Barty.

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In due time—namely, late in the evening of December 31, 1862—Barty hailed a hansom, and went first to summon his good friend Dr. Knight, in Orchard Street, and then he drove to Brixton, and woke up and brought back with him a very respectable, middle-aged, and motherly woman whose name was Jones; and next morning, which was a very sunny, frosty one, my dear little god-daughter was ushered into this sinful world, a fact which was chronicled the very next day in Leah's diary by the simple entry—

"Jan 1.—Roberta was born and the coals came in."

When Roberta was first shown to her papa by the nurse, he was in despair, and ran and shut himself up in his studio, and I believe, almost wept. He feared he had brought a monster into the world. He had always thought that female babies were born with large blue eyes framed with long lashes, a beautiful complexion of the lily and the rose, and their shining flaxen curls already parted in the middle. And this little bald, wrinkled, dark-red, howling lump of humanity all but made him ill. But soon the doctor came and knocked at the door, and said—

"I congratulate you, old fellow, on having produced the most magnificent little she I ever saw in my life—bar none: she might be shown for money."

And it turned out that this was not the coarse, unfeeling chaff poor Barty took it for at first, but the pure and simple truth.

So, my blessed Roberta, pride of your silly old god-father's heart and apple of his eye, mother of Cupid and Ganymede and Aurora and the infant Hercules, think of your poor young father weeping in solitude at the first sight of you, because you were so hideous in his eyes!

You were not so in mine. Next day—you had improved, no doubt—I took you in my arms and thought well of you, especially your little hands that were very prehensile, and your little feet turned in, with rosy toes and little pink nails like shiny gems; and I was complimented by Mrs. Jones on the skill with which I dandled you. I have dandled your sons and daughters, Roberta, and may I live to dandle theirs.

So then Barty dried his tears, if he really shed them—and he swears he did—and went and sat by his wife's bedside, and felt unutterably, as I believe all good men do under similar circumstances; and lo!—proh!—to his wonderment and delight, in the middle of it all, the sense of the north came back like a tide, like an overwhelming avalanche. He declared he all but fainted in the double ineffability of his bliss.

That night he arranged by his bedside writing materials chosen with extra care, and before he went to bed he looked out of window at the stars, and filled his lungs with the clean, frozen, virtuous air of Bloomsbury, and whispered a most passionate invocation to Martia, and implored her forgiveness, and went to sleep hugging the thought of her to his manly breast, now widowed for quite a month to come.

Next morning there was a long letter in bold, vigorous Blaze:—

“MY MORE THAN EVER BELOVED BARTY,—It is for me to implore pardon, not for *you*! Your first-born is proof enough to me how right you were in letting your own instincts guide you in the choice of a wife.

“Ah! and well now I know her worth and your good fortune. I have inhabited her for many months, little as she knows it, dear thing!

“Although she was not the woman I first wanted for you, and had watched so many years, she is all that I could wish, in body and mind, in beauty and sense and goodness of heart and intelligence, in health and strength, and especially in the love with which she has so easily, and I trust so lastingly, filled your heart—for that is the most precious thing of all to me, as you shall know some day, and why; and you will then understand and forgive me for seeming such a shameless egotist and caring so desperately for my own ends.

“Barty I will never doubt you again, and we will do great things together. They will not be quite what I used to hope, but they will be worth doing, and all the doing will be yours. All I can do is to set your brains in motion—those innocent brains that don't know their own strength any more than a herd of bullocks which any little butcher boy can drive to the slaughter-house.

“As soon as Leah is well enough you must tell her all about me—all you know, that is. She won't believe you at first, and she'll think you've gone mad; but she'll have to believe you in time, and she's to be trusted with any secret, and so will you be when once you've shared it with her.

“(By-the-way, I wish you weren't so slipshod and colloquial in your English, Barty—Guardsmen's English, I suppose—which I have to use, as it's yours; your French is much more educated and correct. You remember dear M. Durosier at the Pension Brossard? he taught you well. You must read, and cultivate a decent English style, for the bulk of our joint work must be in English, I think; and I

can only use your own words to make you immortal, and your own way of using them.)

"We will be simple, Barty—as simple as Lemuel Gulliver and the good Robinson Crusoe—and cultivate a fondness for words of one syllable, and if that doesn't do we'll try French.

"Now listen, or, rather, read:

"First of all, I will write out for you a list of books, which you must study whenever you feel I'm inside you—and this more for me than for yourself. Those marked with a cross you must read constantly and carefully at home, the others you must read at the British Museum.

"Get a reading ticket at once, and read the books in the order I put down. Never forget to leave paper and pencil by your bedside. Leah will soon get accustomed to your quiet somnambulism; I will never trouble your rest for more than an hour or so each night, but you can make up for it by staying in bed an hour or two longer. You will have to work during the day from the pencil notes in *Blaze* you will have written during the night, and in the evening, or at any time you are conscious of my presence, read what you have written during the day, and leave it by your bedside when you go to bed, that I may make you correct and alter and suggest—during your sleep.

"Only write on one side of a page, leaving a margin and plenty of space between the lines, and let it be in copybooks, so that the page on the left hand side be left for additions and corrections from my *Blaze* notes, and so forth; you'll soon get into the way of it.

"Then when each copybook is complete—I will let you know—get Leah to copy it out; she writes a very good, legible business hand. All will arrange itself. . . .

"And now, get the books and begin reading them. I shall not be ready to write, nor will you, for more than a month.

"Keep this from everybody but Leah; don't even mention it to Maurice until I give you leave—not but what he's to be thoroughly trusted. You are fortunate in your wife and your friend—I hope the day will come when you will find you have been fortunate in your
"MARTIA."

Here follows a list of books, but it has been more or less carefully erased; and though some of the names are still to be made out, I conclude that Barty did not wish them to be made public.

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Before Roberta was born, Leah had reserved herself an hour every morning and every afternoon for what she called the cultivation of her mind—the careful reading of good standard books, French and English, that she might qualify herself in time, as she said, for the intellectual society in which she hoped to mix some day; she built castles in the air, being somewhat of a hero-worshipper in secret, and dreamt of meeting her heroes in the flesh, now that she was Barty's wife,

But when she became a mother there was not only Roberta who required much attention, but Barty himself made great calls upon her time besides.

To his friend's astonishment he had taken it into his head to write a book. Good heavens! Barty writing a book! What on earth could the dear boy have to write about?

He wrote much of the book at night in bed, and corrected and put it into shape during the daytime; and finally Leah had to copy it all out neatly in her best handwriting, and this copying out of Barty's books became to her an all but daily task for many years—a happy labour of love, and one she would depute to no one else; no hired hand should interfere with these precious productions of her husband's genius. So that most of the standard works, English and French, that she grew to thoroughly master were of her husband's writing—not a bad education, I venture to think!

Besides, it was more in her nature and in the circumstances of her life that she should become a woman of business and a woman of the world rather than a reader of books—one who grew to thoroughly understand life as it presented itself to her; and men and women, and especially children; and the management of a large and much-frequented house; for they soon moved away from Southampton Row.

She quickly arrived at a complete mastery of all such science as this—and it is a science; such a mastery as I have never seen surpassed by any other woman, of whatever world. She would have made a splendid Marchioness of Whitby, this daughter of a low-comedy John Gilpin; she would have beaten the Whitby record!

She developed into a woman of the world in the best sense—full of sympathy, full of observation and quick understanding of other's needs and thoughts and feelings; absolutely sincere, of a constant and even temper, and a cheerfulness that never failed—the result of her splendid health; without caprice, without a spark of vanity, without selfishness of any kind—generous, openhanded, charitable to a fault; always taking the large and generous view of everything and everybody; a little impulsive perhaps, but not often having to regret her impulses; of unwearied devotion to her husband, and capable of any heroism or self-sacrifice for his sake; of that I feel sure.

No one is perfect, of course. Unfortunately, she was apt to be somewhat jealous at first of his singularly catholic and very frankly expressed admiration of every opposite type of female beauty; but she soon grew to see that there was safety in numbers, and she was made to feel in time that her own type was the arch-type of all in his eyes, and herself the arch-representative of that type in his heart.

She was also jealous in her friendships, and was not happy unless constantly assured of her friends' warm love—Ida's, mine, even that of her own father and mother and Good heavens! had ever a woman less cause for doubt or complaint on that score!

Then, like all extremely conscientious people who always know their own mind and do their very best, she did not like to be found

fault with; she secretly found such fault with herself that she thought that was fault-finding enough. Also, she was somewhat rigid in sticking to the ways she thought were right, and in the selection of these ways she was not always quite infallible. *On a les défauts de ses qualités*; and a little obstinacy is often the fault of a very noble quality indeed!

Though somewhat shy and standoffish during the first year or two of her married life, she soon became "*joliment dégourdie*," as Barty called it; and I can scarcely conceive any position in which she would have been awkward or embarrassed for a moment, so ready was she always with just the right thing to say—or to withhold, if silence were better than speech; and her fit and proper place in the world as a great man's wife—and a good and beautiful woman—was always conceded to her with due honour, even by the most impertinent among the highly-placed of her own sex, without any necessity for self-assertion on her part whatever—without assumption of any kind.

It was a strange and peculiar personal ascendancy she managed to exert with so little effort, an ascendancy partly physical, no doubt; and the practice of it had begun in the West End emporium of the "Universal Fur Company, Limited."

How admirably she filled the high and arduous position of wife to such a man as Barty Josselin is well known to the world at large. It was no sinecure! but she gloried in it; and to her thorough apprehension and management of their joint lives and all that came of them, as well as to her beauty and sense and genial warmth, was due her great popularity for many years in an immense and ever-widening circle, where the memory of her is still preserved and cherished as one of the most remarkable women of her time.

With all this power of passionate self-surrender to her husband in all things, little and big, she was not of the type that cannot see the faults of the beloved one, and Barty was very often frankly pulled up for his short-comings, and by no means had it all his own way when his own way wasn't good for him. She was a person to reckon with, and incapable of the slightest flattery, even to Barty, who was so fond of it from her, and in spite of her unbounded admiration for him.

Such was your mother, my dear Roberta, in the bloom of her early twenties and ever after; till her death, in fact—on the day following his!

* * * * *

Somewhere about the spring of 1863 she said to me—

"Bob, Barty has written a book. Either I'm an idiot, or blinded by conjugal conceit, or else Barty's book—which I've copied out myself in my very best hand-writing—is one of the most beautiful and important books ever written. Come and dine with me to-night; Barty's dining in the City with the Fishmongers—you shall have what you like best: pickled pork and pease-pudding, a dressed crab and a Welsh rabbit to follow, and draught stout—and after dinner I

will read you the beginning of *Sardonyx*—that's what he's called it—and I should like to have your opinion."

I dined with her as she wished. We were alone, and she told me how he wrote every night in bed, in a kind of ecstasy—between two and four, in Blaze—and then elaborated his work during the day, and made sketches for it.

And after dinner she read me the first part of *Sardonyx*; it took three hours.

Then Barty came home, having dined well, and in very high spirits.



"SARDONYX"

"Well, old fellow! how do you like *Sardonyx*?"

I was so moved and excited I could say nothing—I couldn't even smoke. I was allowed to take the precious manuscript away with me, and finished it during the night.

Next morning I wrote to him out of the fulness of my heart.

I read it aloud to my father and mother, and then lent it to Scatcherd, who read it to Ida. In twenty-four hours our gay and genial Barty—our Robin Goodfellow and Merry Andrew, our funny man—had become for us a demi-god; for all but my father, who looked upon him as a splendid but irretrievably lost soul, and mourned over him as over a son of his own.

And in two months *Sardonix* was before the reading world, and the middle-aged reader will remember the wild enthusiasm and the storm it raised.

All that is ancient history, and I will do no more than allude to the unparalleled bitterness of the attacks made by the Church on a book which is now quoted again and again from every pulpit in England—in the world—and has been translated into almost every language under the sun.

Thus he leapt into fame and fortune at a bound, and at first they delighted him. He would take little Roberta on to the top of his head and dance "La Paladine" on his hearth-rug, singing—

"Rataplan, Rataplan,
I'm a celebrated man—"

in imitation of Sergeant Buncer in *Cox and Box*.

But in less than a year celebrity had quite palled, and all his money bored him—as mine does me. He had a very small appetite for either the praise of the pudding which were served out to him in such excess all through his life. It was only his fondness for the work itself that kept his nose so constantly to the grindstone.

Within six months of the *Sardonix* Barty wrote *La quatrième Dimension* in French, which was published by Dollfus-Moïs frères, in Paris, with if possible a greater success; for the clerical opposition was even more virulent. The English translation, which is admirable is by Scatcherd.

Then came *Motes in a Moonbeam*, *Interstellar Harmonics*, and *Berthe aux grands Pieds* within eighteen months, so that before he was quite thirty, in the space of two years, Barty had produced five works—three in English and two in French—which, though merely novels and novelettes, have had as wide and far-reaching an influence on modern thought as the *Origin of Species*, that appeared about the same time, and which are such, for simplicity of expression, exposition, and idea, that an intelligent ploughboy can get all the good and all the pleasure from them almost as easily as any philosopher or sage.

Such was Barty's début as a man of letters. This is not the place to criticise his literary work, nor am I the proper person to do so;



"RATAPLAN, RATAPLAN"

enough has been written already about Barty Josselin during his lifetime to fill a large library—in nearly every language there is. I tremble to think of what has yet to follow!

Sardonys came of age nearly twelve years ago—what a coming of age that was the reader will remember well. I shall not forget its celebration at Mansfield; it happened to coincide with the birth of Barty's first grandchild, at that very house.

I will now go back to Barty's private life, which is the sole object of this humble attempt at book-making on my part.

During the next ten years Barty's literary activity was immense. Beautiful books followed each other in rapid succession—and so did beautiful little Bartys, and Leah's hands were full.

And as each book, English or French, was more beautiful than the last, so was each little Barty, male or female. All over Kensington and Campden Hill—for they took Gretna Lodge, next door to Cornelys, the sculptor's—the splendour of these little Bartys, their size, their beauty, their health and high spirits, became almost a joke, and their mother became almost a comic character in consequence—like the old lady who lived in a shoe.

Money poured in with a profusion few writers of good books have ever known before, and every penny not wanted for immediate household expenses was pounced upon by Scatcherd or by me to be invested in the manner we thought best: nous avons eu la main heureuse!

The Josselins kept open house, and money was not to be despised, little as Barty ever thought of money.

Then every autumn the entire *smalah* migrated to the coast of Normandy, or Picardy, or Brittany, or to the Highlands of Inverness, and with them the Scatcherds and the chronicler of these happy times—not to mention cats, dogs, and squirrels, and guinea-pigs, and white mice, and birds of all kinds, from which the children would not be parted, and the real care of which, both at home and abroad, ultimately devolved on poor Mrs. Josselin—who was not so fond of animals as all that—so that her life was full of overflowing of household cares.

Another duty had devolved upon her also; that of answering the passionate letters that her husband received by every post from all parts of the world—especially America—and which he could never be induced to answer himself. Every morning regularly he would begin his day's work by writing "Yours truly—B. Josselin" on quite a score of square bits of paper, to be sent through the post to fair English and American autograph collectors who forwarded stamped envelopes and sometimes photographs of themselves, that he might study the features of those who loved him at a respectful distance, and who so frankly told their love; all of which bored Barty to extinction, and was a source of endless amusement to his wife.

But even *she* was annoyed when a large unstamped or insufficiently-stamped parcel arrived by post from America, enclosing a photograph

of her husband to which his signature was desired, and containing no stamps to frank it on its return journey!

And the photographers he had to sit to! and the interviewers, male and female, to whom he had to deny himself! Life was too short!

How often has a sturdy labourer or artisan come up to him, as he and I walked together, with—

"I should very much like to shake you by the hand, Mr. Josselin, if I might make so bold, sir!"

And such an appeal as this would please him far more than the most fervently written outpourings of the female hearts he had touched.

They, of course, received endless invitations to stay at country-houses all over the United Kingdom, where they might have been lionised to their hearts' content, if such had been their wish; but these they never accepted. They never spent a single night away from their own house till most of their children were grown up—or ever wanted to; and every year they got less and less into the way of dining out, or spending the evening from home—and I don't wonder; no gayer or jollier home ever was than that they made for themselves, and each other, and their intimate friends; not even at Cornelys's, next door, was better music to be heard; for Barty was friends with all the music-makers, English and foreign, who cater for us in and out of the season; even *they* read his books, and understood them; and they sang and played better for Barty—and for Cornelys, next door—than even for the music-loving multitude who filled their pockets with British gold.

And the difference between Barty's house and that of Cornelys was that at the former the gatherings were smaller and more intimate—as became the smaller house—and one was happier there in consequence.

Barty gave himself up entirely to his writing, and left everything else to his wife, or to me, or to Scatcherd. She was really a mother to him, as well as a passionately loving and devoted helpmeet.

To make up for this, whenever she was ill, which didn't often happen—except of course, when she had a baby—he forgot all his writing in his anxiety about her; and in his care of her, and his solicitude for her ease and comfort, he became quite a motherly old woman, a better nurse than Mrs. Jones or Mrs. Gibson—as practical and sensible and full of authority as Dr. Knight himself.

And when it was all over, all his amiable carelessness came back, and with it his genius, his school-boy high spirits, his tomfooling, his romps with his children, and his utter irresponsibility, and absolute disdain for all the ordinary business of life; and the happy genial temper that never seemed to know a moment's depression or nourish an unkind thought.

Poor Barty! what would he have done without us all, and what should we have done without Barty? As Scatcherd said of him, "He's having his portion in this life."

But it was not really so.

Then, in 1870, he bought that charming house, Mansfield, by the Thames, which he rechristened Marsfield; and which he—with the help of the Scatcherds and myself, for it became our hobby—made into one of the most delightful abodes in England. It was the real home for all of us; I really think it is one of the loveliest spots on earth. It was a bargain, but it cost a lot of money; altogether, never was money better spent—even as a mere investment. When I think of what it is worth now! *Je suis homme d'affaires!*

What a house-warming that was on the very day that France and Germany went to war; we little guessed what was to come for the country we all loved so dearly, or we should not have been so glad.

I am conscious that all this is rather dull reading. Alas! Merry England is a devilish dull place compared to foreign parts—and success, respectability, and domestic bliss are the dullest things to write—or read—about that I know—and with middle-age to follow too!

It was during that first summer at Marsfield that Barty told me the extraordinary story of Martia, and I really thought he had gone mad. For I knew him to be the most truthful person alive.

Even now I hardly know what to think, nor did Leah—nor did Barty himself up to the day of his death.

He showed me all her letters, *which I may deem it advisable to publish some day*; not only the Blaze suggestions for his books, and all her corrections; things to occupy him for life—all, of course, in his own handwriting; but many letters about herself also written in sleep and by his own hand; and the style is Barty's—not the style in which he wrote his books, and which is not to be matched; but that in which he wrote his Blaze letters to me.

If her story is true—and I never read a piece of documentary evidence more convincing—these letters constitute the most astonishing revelation ever yet vouchsafed to this earth.

But her story cannot be true!

That Barty's version of his realtions with "The Martian" is absolutely sincere it is impossible to doubt. He was quite unconscious of the genesis of every book he ever wrote. His first hint of every one of them was the elaborately worked out suggestion he found by his bedside in the morning—written by himself in his sleep during the preceding night, with his eyes wide open, while more often than not his wife anxiously watched him at his unconscious work, careful not to wake or disturb him in any way.

Roughly epitomised, Martia's story was this:

For an immense time she had gone through countless incarnations, from the lowest form to the highest, in the cold and dreary planet we call Mars, the outermost of the four inhabited worlds of our system, where the sun seems no bigger than an orange, and which for its moist, thin, rich atmosphere and peculiar magnetic conditions that differ from ours, would be too cold above ground for human or

animal or vegetable life. As it is, it is only inhabited now in the neighbourhood of its equator, and even there during its long winter it is colder and more desolate than Cape Horn or Spitzbergen—except that the shallow, fresh-water sea does not freeze except for a few months at either pole.

All these incarnations were forgotten by her but the last; nothing remained of them all but a vague consciousness that they had once been, until their culmination in what would be in Mars the equivalent of a woman on our earth.

Man in Mars is, it appears, a very different being from what he is here. He is amphibious, and descends from no monkey, but from a small animal that seems to be something between our seal and our sea-lion.

According to Martia, his beauty is to that of the seal as that of the Theseus or Antinous to that of an orang-outang. His five senses are extraordinarily acute, even the sense of touch in his webbed fingers and toes; and in addition to these he possesses a sixth, that comes from his keen and unintermittent sense of the magnetic current, which is far stronger in Mars than on the earth, and far more complicated, and more thoroughly understood.

When any object is too delicate and minute to be examined by the sense of touch and sight, the Martian shuts his eyes and puts it against the pit of his stomach, and knows all about it, even its inside.

In the absolute dark, or with his eyes shut, and when he stops his ears, he is more intensely conscious of what immediately surrounds him than at any other time, except that all colour-perception ceases; conscious not only of material objects, but of what is passing in his fellow-Martian's mind—and this for an area of many hundreds of cubic yards.

In the course of its evolutions this extraordinary faculty—which exists on earth in a rudimentary state, but only among some birds and fish and insects and in the lower forms of animal life—has developed the Martian mind in a direction very different from ours, since no inner life apart from the rest, no privacy, no concealment is possible except at a distance involving absolute isolation; not even thought is free; yet in some incomprehensible way there is, as a matter of fact, a really greater freedom of thought than is conceivable among ourselves: absolute liberty in absolute obedience to law, a paradox beyond our comprehension.

Their habits are as simple as those we attribute to the cave-dwellers during the prehistoric periods of the earth's existence. But their moral sense is so far in advance of ours that we haven't even a terminology by which to express it.

In comparison, the highest and best of us are monsters of iniquity and egoism, cruelty and corruption; and our planet (a very heaven for warmth and brilliancy and beauty, in spite of earthquakes and cyclones and tornadoes) is a very hell through the creatures that people it—a shambles, a place of torture, a grotesque and impure pandemonium.

These exemplary Martians wear no clothes but the exquisite fur with which nature has endowed them, and which constitutes a part of their immense beauty, according to Martia.

They feed exclusively on edible moss and roots and submarine seaweed, which they know how to grow and prepare and preserve. Except for heavy-winged bat-like birds, and big fish, which they have domesticated and use for their own purposes in an incredible manner (incarnating a portion of themselves and their consciousness at will in their bodies), they have cleared Mars of all useless and harmful and mutually destructive forms of animal life. A sorry fauna, the Martian—even at its best—and a flora beneath contempt, compared to ours.

They are great engineers and excavators, great irrigators, great workers in delicate metal, stone, marble, and precious gems (there is no wood to speak of); great sculptors and decorators of the beautiful caves, so fancifully and so intricately connected, in which they live, and which have taken thousands of years to design and excavate and ventilate and adorn, and which they warm and light up at will in a beautiful manner by means of the tremendous magnetic current.

This richly partly-coloured light is part of their mental and moral life in a way it is not in us to apprehend, and has its exact equivalent in sound—and vice versa.

They have no language of words, and do not need it, since they can only be isolated in thought from each other by a distance greater than that which any vocal sound can traverse; but their organs of voice and hearing are far more complex and perfect than ours, and their atmosphere infinitely more conductive of phonal vibrations.

It seems that everything which can be apprehended by the eye or hand is capable of absolute sonorous translation: light, colour, texture, shape in its three dimensions, weight, density. The phonal expression and comprehension of all these are acquired by the Martian baby almost as soon as it knows how to swim or dive, or move upright and erect on dry land or beneath it; and the mechanical translation of such expression, by means of wind and wire and sounding texture and curved surface of extraordinary elaboration, is the principle business of the Martian life—an art by which all the combined past experience and future aspirations of the race receive the fullest utterance. Here again personal magnetism plays an enormous part.

And it is by means of this long and patiently evolved and highly trained faculty that the race is still developing towards perfection with constant strain and effort—although the planet is far advanced in its decadence, and within measurable distance of its unfitness for life of any kind.

All is so evenly and harmoniously balanced, whether above ground or beneath, that existence is full of joy in spite of the tremendous strain of life, in spite also of a dreariness of outlook, on barren nature, which is not to be matched by the most inhospitable regions of the

earth; and death is looked upon as the crowning joy of all, although life is prolonged by all the means in their power.

For when the life of the body ceases, and the body itself is burned and its ashes scattered to the winds and waves, the infinitesimal, imponderable, and indestructible something we call the *soul* is known to lose itself in a sunbeam and make for the sun, with all its memories about it, that it may then receive further development, fitting it for other systems altogether beyond conception; and the longer it has lived in Mars the better for its eternal life in the future.

But it often, on its journey sunwards, gets entangled in other beams, and finds its way to some intermediate planet—Mercury, Venus, or the Earth; and putting on flesh and blood and bone once more, and losing for a space all its knowledge of its own past, it has to undergo another mortal incarnation—a new personal experience, beginning with its new birth; a dream and a forgetting, till it awakens again after the pangs of dissolution, and finds itself a step further on the way to freedom.

Martia, it seems, came to our earth in a shower of shooting-stars a hundred years ago. She had not lived her full measure of years in Mars; she had elected to be suppressed, through some unfitness, physical or mental or moral, which rendered it inexpedient that she should become a mother of Martians, for they are very particular about that sort of thing in Mars: we shall have to be so here some day, or else we shall degenerate and become extinct; or even worse!

Many Martian souls come to our planet in this way, it seems, and hasten to incarnate themselves in as promising unborn though just begotten men and women as they find, that they may the sooner be free to hie them sunwards with all their collected memories.

According to Martia, most of the best and finest of our race have souls that have lived forgotten lives in Mars. But Martia was in no hurry; she was full of intelligent curiosity, and for ten years she went up and down the earth, revelling in the open air, lodging herself in the brains and bodies of birds, beasts, and fishes, insects, and animals of all kinds—like a hermit crab in a shell that belongs to another—but without the slightest inconvenience to the legitimate owners, who were always quite unconscious of her presence, although she made what use she could of what wits they had.

Thus she had a heavenly time in this sunlit earth of ours—now a worm, now a porpoise, now a sea-gull or a dragon-fly, now some fleet-footed, keen-eyed quadruped that did not live by slaying, for she had a horror of bloodshed.

She could only go where these creatures chose to take her, since she had no power to control their actions in the slightest degree; but she saw, heard, smelled and touched and tasted with their organs of sense, and was as conscious of their animal life as they were themselves. Her description of this phase of her earthly career is full of extraordinary interest, and sometimes extremely funny—though quite unconsciously so, no doubt. For instance, she tells how happy

she once was when she inhabited a small brown Pomeranian dog called "Schnapfel," in Cologne, and belonging to a Jewish family who dealt in old clothes near the Cathedral; and how she loved them and looked up to them—how she revelled in fried fish and the smell of it—and in all the stinks in every street of the famous city—all except one, that arose from Herr Johann Maria Farina's renowned emporium in the Julichs Platz, which so offended the canine nostrils that she had to give up inhabiting that small Pomeranian dog for ever, &c.

Then she took to man, and inhabited man and woman, and especially child, in all parts of the globe for many years; and, finally, for the last fifty or sixty years or so, she settled herself exclusively among the best and healthiest English she could find.

She took a great fancy to the Rohans, who are singularly well endowed in health of mind and body, and physical beauty, and happiness of temper. She became especially fond of the ill-fated but amiable Lord Runswick—Barty's father. Then through him she knew Antoinette, and loved her so well that she determined to incarnate herself at last as their child; but she had become very cautious and worldly during her wandering life on earth, and felt that she would not be quite happy either as a man or a woman in Western Europe unless she were reborn in holy wedlock—a concession she made to our British prejudices in favour of respectability; she describes herself as the only Martian Philistine and snob.

Evil communications corrupt good manners, and poor Martia, to her infinite sorrow and self-reproach, was conscious of a sad lowering of her moral tone after this long frequentation of the best earthly human beings—even the best English.

She grew to admire worldly success, rank, social distinction, the perishable beauty of outward form, the lust of the flesh and the pride of the eye—the pomps and vanities of this wicked world—and to basely long for these in her own person!

Then when Barty was born she loved to inhabit his singularly well constituted little body better than any other, and to identify herself with his happy child-life, and enjoy his singularly perfect senses, and sleep his beautiful sleep, and revel in the dreams he so completely forgot when he woke—reminiscent dreams, that she was actually able to weave out of the unconscious brain that was his: absolutely using his dormant organs of memory for purposes of her own, to remember and relive her own past pleasures and pains, so sensitively and highly organised was he; and to her immense surprise she found she could make him feel her presence even when awake by means of the magnetic sense that pervaded her strongly as it pervades all Martian souls, till they reincarnate themselves among us and forget.

And thus he was conscious of the north whenever she enjoyed the hospitality of his young body.

She stuck to him for many years, till he offended her taste by his

looseness of life as a Guardsman (for she was very extremely strait-laced); and she inhabited him no more for some time, though she often watched him through the eyes of others, and always loved him and lamented sorely over his faults and follies.

Then one memorable night, in the energy of her despair at his resolve to slip that splendid body of his, she was able to influence him in his sleep, and saved his life; and all her love came back tenfold.

She had never been able to impose a fraction of her will on any being, animal or human, that she had ever inhabited on earth until that memorable night in Malines, where she made him write at her dictation.

Then she conceived an immense desire that he should marry the splendid Julia, whom she had often inhabited also, that she might one day be a child of his by such a mother, and go through her earthly incarnation in the happiest conceivable circumstances; but herein she was balked by Barty's instinctive preference for Leah, and again gave him up in a huff.

But she soon took to inhabiting Leah a great deal, and found her just as much to her taste for her own future earthly mother as the divine Julia herself, and made up her mind she would make Barty great and famous by a clever management of his very extraordinary brains, of which she had discovered the hidden capacity, and influence the earth for its good—for she had grown to love the beautiful earth, in spite of its iniquities—and finally be a child of Barty and Leah, every new child of whom seemed an improvement on the last, as though practice made perfect.

Such is, roughly, the story of Martia.

There is no doubt—both Barty and Leah agreed with me in this—that it is an easy story to invent, though it is curiously convincing to read in the original shape, with all its minute details and their verisimilitude; but even then there is nothing in it that the author of *Sardonix* could not have easily imagined and made more convincing still.

He declared that all through life on awaking from his night's sleep he always felt conscious of having had extraordinary dreams—even as a child—but that he forgot them in the very act of waking, in spite of strenuous efforts to recall them. But now and again on sinking into sleep the vague memory of those forgotten dreams would come back, and they were all of a strange life under new conditions—just such a life as Martia had described—where arabesques of artificial light and interwoven curves of subtle sound had a significance undreamt of by mortal eyes or ears, and served as conductors to a heavenly bliss unknown to earth—revelations denied to us here, or we should be very different beings from what we most unhappily are.

He thought it quite possible that his brain in sleep had at last become so active, through the exhausting and depleting medical régime that he went through in Malines, that it actually was able to dictate its will to his body, and that everything might have happened to him as it did then and afterwards without any supernatural or ultranatural agency whatever—without a Martia!

He might, in short, have led a kind of dual life, and Martia might be a simple fancy or invention of his brain in an abnormal state of activity during slumber; and both Leah and I inclined to this belief (but for a strange thing which happened later, and which I will tell in due time). Indeed, it all seems so silly and far-fetched, so "out of the question," that one feels almost ashamed at bringing this Martia into a serious biography of a great man—un conte à dormir debout! But you must wait for the end.

Anyhow, the singular fact remains that in some way inexplicable to himself Barty has influenced the world in a direction which it never entered his thoughts even to conceive, so far as he remembered.

Think of all he has done.

He has robbed Death of nearly all its terrors; even for the young it is no longer the grisly phantom it once was for ourselves, but rather of an aspect mellow and benign; for to the most sceptical he (and only he) has restored that absolute conviction of an indestructible germ of Immortality within us, born of remembrance made perfect and complete after dissolution: he alone has built the golden bridge in the middle of which science and faith can shake hands over at least one common possibility—nay, one common certainty for those who have read him aright.

There is no longer despair in bereavement—all bereavement is but a half parting; there is no real parting except for those who survive, and the longest earthly life is but a span. Whatever the future may be, the past will be ours for ever, and that means our punishment and our reward and reunion with those we loved. It is a happy phrase, that which closes the career of *Sardonvix*. It has become as universal as the Lord's Prayer!

To think that so simple and obvious a solution should have lain hidden all these æons, to turn up at last as though by chance in a little illustrated story-book! What a nugget!

Où avions-nous donc la tête et les yeux?

Physical pain and the origin of evil seem the only questions with which he has not been able to grapple. And yet if those difficulties are ever dealt with and mastered and overcome for us, it can only be by some follower of Barty's methods.

It is true, no doubt, that through him suicide has become the normal way out of our troubles when these are beyond remedy. I will not express any opinion as to the ethical significance of this admitted result of his teaching, which many of us still find it so hard to reconcile with their conscience.

Then, by a dexterous manipulation of our sympathies that amounts to absolute conjuring, he has given the death-blow to all cruelty that serves for our amusement, and killed the pride and pomp and circumstance of glorious sport, and made them ridiculous with his lusty laugh; even the bull-fights in Spain are coming to an end, and all through a Spanish translation of *Life-blood*. All the cruelties of the world are bound to follow in time, and this is not so much because

they are cruel as because they are ridiculous and mean and ugly, and would make us laugh if they didn't make us cry.

And to whom but Barty Josselin do we owe it that our race is on an average already from four to six inches taller than it was thirty years ago, men and women alike; that strength and beauty are rapidly becoming the rule among us, and weakness and ugliness the exception?

He has been hard on these; he has been cruel to be kind, and they have received notice to quit, and been generously compensated in advance, I think! Who in these days would dare to enter the holy state of wedlock unless they were pronounced physically, morally, and mentally fit—to procreate their kind—not only by their own conscience, but by the common consent of all who know them? And that beauty, health, and strength are a part of that fitness, and old age a bar to it, who would dare deny?

I'm no Adonis myself. I've got a long upper lip and an Irish kink in my nose, inherited perhaps from some maternally ancestral Blake of Derrydown, who may have been a proper blackguard! And that kink should be now, no doubt, the lawful property of some ruffianly cattle-houghing moonlighter, whose nose—which should have been mine—is probably as straight as Barty's. For in Ireland are to be found the handsomest and ugliest people in all Great Britain and in Great Britain the handsomest and ugliest people in the whole world.

Anyhow, I have known my place. I have not perpetuated that kink, and with it, possibly, the base and cowardly instincts of which it was meant to be the outward and visible sign—though it wasn't in my case—that my fellow-men might give me a wide berth.

Leah's girlish instinct was a right one when she said me nay that afternoon by the Chelsea pier—for how could she see inside me, poor child? How could Beauty guess the Beast was a Prince in disguise? It was no fairy tale!

Things have got mixed up; but they're coming right, and all through Barty Josselin.

And what vulgar pride and narrowness and meannesses and vanities and uglinesses of life, in mass and class and individual, are now impossible!—and all through Barty Josselin and his quaint ironies of pen and pencil, for ever trembling between tears and laughter, with never a cynical spark or a hint of bitterness.

How he has held his own against the world! how he has scourged its wickedness and folly, this gigantic optimist, who never wrote a single line in his own defence!

How quickly their laugh recoiled on those early laughers! and how Barty alone laughed well because he laughed the last, and taught the laughers to laugh on his side! People thought he was always laughing. It was not so.

PART NINTH

"*Cara deum soboles, magnum Jovis incrementum.*"

—VIRGIL.

THE immense fame and success that Barty Josselin achieved were to him a source of constant disquiet. He could take neither pride nor pleasure in what seemed to him not his; he thought himself a fraud.

Yet only the mere skeleton of his work was built up for him by his demon; all the beauty of form and colour, all the grace of movement and outer garb, are absolutely his own.

It has been noticed how few eminent men of letters were intimate with the Josselins, though the best among them—except, of course, Thomas Carlyle—have been so enthusiastic and outspoken in their love and admiration of his work.

He was never at his ease in their society, and felt himself a kind of charlatan.

The fact is, the general talk of such men was often apt to be over his head, as it would have been over mine, and often made him painfully diffident and shy. He needn't have been; he little knew the kind of feeling he inspired among the highest and best.

Why, one day at the Marathonæum, the first and foremost of them all, the champion smiter of the Philistines, the apostle of culture and sweetness and light, told me that, putting Barty's books out of the question, he always got more profit and pleasure out of Barty's society than that of any man he knew.

"It does me good to be in the same room with him; the freshness of the man, his voice, his aspect, his splendid vitality and mother-wit, his boyish spirit, and the towering genius behind it all. I only wish to goodness I was an intimate friend of his as you are; it would be a liberal education to me!"

But Barty's reverence and admiration for true scholarship and great literary culture in others amounted to absolute awe, and filled him with self-distrust.

There is no doubt that until he was universally accepted, the crudeness of his literary method was duly criticised with great severity by those professional literary critics who sometimes carp with such a big mouth at their betters, and occasionally kill the Keatses of this world!

In writing, as in everything else, he was an amateur, and more or less remained one for life; but the greatest of his time accepted him at once, and laughed and wept, and loved him for his obvious faults as well as for his qualities. *Tous les genres sont bons, hormis le genre ennuyeux!* And Barty was so delightfully the reverse of a bore!

Dear me! what matters it how faultlessly we paint or write or sing if no one will care to look or read or listen? He is all fault that hath no fault at all, and we poor outsiders all but yawn in his face for his pains.

They should only write and sing for each other, these impeccables, who so despise success and revile the successful. How do they live, I wonder? Do they take in each other's washing, or review each other's books?

It edifies one to see what a lot of trouble these deriders of other people's popularity will often take to advertise themselves, and how they yearn for that popular acclaim they so scornfully denounce.

Barty was not a well-read man by any means; his scholarship was that of an idle French boy who leaves school at seventeen, after having been plucked for a cheap French degree, and goes straightway into her Majesty's Household Brigade.

At the beginning of his literary career it would cut him to the quick to find himself alluded to as that inspired Anglo-Gallic buffoon, the ex-Guardsman, whose real vocation, when he wasn't twaddling about the music of the spheres, or writing moral French books, was to be Mr. Toole's understudy.

He was even impressed by the smartness of those second-rate decadents, French and English, who so gloried in their own degeneracy—as though one were to glory in scrofula or rickets; those unpleasant little anthropoids with the sexless little muse and the dirty Eros, who would ride their angry, jealous little tilt at him in the vain hope of provoking some retort which would have lifted them up to glory! Where are they now? He has improved them all away! Who ever hears of decadents nowadays?

Then there were the grubs of Grub Street, who sometimes manage to squirt a drop from their slime-bags on to the swiftly passing boot that scorns to squash them. He had no notion of what manner of creatures they really were, these gentles! He did not meet them at any club he belonged to—it was not likely. Clubs have a way of blackballing grubs—especially grubs that are out of the common grubby; nor did he sit down to dinner with them at any dinner-table, or come across them at any house he was by way of frequenting; but he imagined they were quite important persons because they did not sign their articles! and he quite mistook their place in the economy of creation. *C'était un naïf, le beau Josselin!*

Big fleas have little fleas, and they've got to put up with them! There is no "poudre-insecticide" for literary vermin—and more's the pity! (Good heavens! what would the generous and delicate-minded Barty say, if he were alive, at my delivering myself in this unworthy fashion about these long-forgotten assailants of his, and at my age too—he who never penned a line in retaliation! He would say I was the most unseemly grub of them all, and he would be quite right; so I am just now, and ought to know better—but it amuses me.)

Then there were the melodious bardlets who imitate those who imitate the forgotten minor poets of the olden time and log-roll each other in quaint old English. They did not log-roll Barty, whom they thought coarse and vulgar, and wrote to that effect in very plain English that was not old, but quite up to date.

"How splendidly they write verse!" he would say, and actually once or twice he would pick up one or two of their cheap little archaic mannerisms and proudly use them as his own, and be quite angry to find that Leah had carefully expunged them in her copy.

"A fair and gracious garden indeed!" says Leah. "I won't have you use such ridiculous words, Barty—you mean a *pretty* garden, and you shall say so; or even a *beautiful* garden if you like!—and no more '*manifolds*,' and '*there-anents*,' and '*in veriest sooths*,' and '*waters wan*,' and '*wan waters*,' and all that. I won't stand it; they don't suit your style at all!"

She and Scatcherd and I between us soon laughed him out of these innocent little literary vagaries, and he remained content with the homely words he had inherited from his barbarian ancestors in England (they speak good English, our barbarians), and the simple phrasing he had learnt from M. Durosier's classe de littérature at the Institution Brossard.

One language helps another; even the smattering of a dead language is better than no extra language at all, and that's why, at such cost of time and labour and paternal cash, we learnt to smatter Greek and Latin, I suppose. "*Arma virumque cano*"—"Tityre tu patula"—"*Mæcenas atavis*"—"Μῆνιν ἄειδε"—and there you are! It sticks in the memory, and it's as simple as "How d'ye do?"

Anyhow, it is pretty generally admitted, both here and in France, that for grace and ease and elegance and absolute clearness combined, Barty Josselin's literary style has never been surpassed and very seldom equalled; and whatever his other faults, when he was at his ease he had the same graceful gift in his talk, both French and English.

It might be worth while my translating here the record of an impression made by Barty and his surroundings on a very accomplished Frenchman, M. Paroly, of the *Débats*, who paid him a visit in the summer of 1869, at Campden Hill.

I may mention that Barty hated to be interviewed and questioned about his literary work—he declared he was afraid of being found out.

But if once the interviewer managed to evade the lynx-eyed Leah, who had a horror of him, and get inside the studio, and make good his footing there, and were a decently pleasant fellow to boot, Barty would soon get over his aversion—utterly forget he was being interviewed—and talk as to an old friend; especially if the reviewer were a Frenchman or an American.

The interviewer is an insidious and wily person, and often presents himself to the soft-hearted celebrity in such humble and pathetic guise that one really hasn't the courage to snub him. He has come such a long way for such a little thing! it is such a lowly function he plies at the foot of that tall tree whose top you reached at a single bound! And he is supposed to be a "gentleman," and has no other means of keeping body and soul together! Then he is so prostrate in admiration before your Immensity. . . .

So you give way, and out comes the little note-book, and out comes the little cross examination.

As a rule you are none the worse and the world is none the better; we know all about you already—all, at least, that we want to know; we have heard it all before, over and over again. But a poor fellow has earned his crust, and goes home the happier for having talked to you about yourself, and been treated like a man and a brother.

But sometimes the reviewer is very terrible indeed in his jaunty vulgarisation of your distinguished personality, and you have to wince and redden, and rue the day you let him inside your house, and live down those light familiar paragraphs in which he describes you and the way you dress, and how you look and what jolly things you say; and on what free and easy terms *he* is with you, of all people in the world!

But the most terrible of all is the pleasant gentleman from America, who has yearned to know you for *so* many years, and comes perhaps with a letter of introduction—or even without!—not to interview you or write about you (good heavens! he hates and scorns that modern pest, the interviewer), but to sit at your feet and worship at your shrine, and tell you all of the good you have done him and his, all the happiness you have given them all—"the debt of a lifetime!"

And you let yourself go before him, and so do your family, and so do your old friends; is *he* not also a friend, though not an old one? You part with him almost in sorrow, he's so nice! And in three weeks some kind person sends you from the other side such a printed account of you and yours—so abominably true, so abominably false—that the remembrance of it makes you wake up in the dead of night, and most unjustly loathe an entire continent for breeding and harbouring such a shameless type of press reptile!

I feel hard-hearted towards the interviewer, I own. I wish him, and those who employ him, a better trade; and a better taste to whoever reads what he writes. But Barty could be hard-hearted to nobody, and always regretted having granted the interview when he saw the published outcome of it.

Fortunately, M. Paroly was decently discreet.

"I've got a Frenchman coming this afternoon—a tremendous swell," said Barty at lunch.

Leah. "Who is he?"

Barty. "M. Paroly, of the *Débats*."

Leah. "What is he when he's at home?"

Barty. "A famous journalist; as you'd know if you'd read the French newspapers sometimes, which you never do."

Leah. "Haven't got the time. He's coming to interview you, I suppose, and make French newspaper copy out of you."

Barty. "Why shouldn't he come just for the pleasure of making my acquaintance?"

Leah. "And mine—I'll be there and talk to him too!"

Barty. "My dear, he probably doesn't speak a word of English; and your French, you know! You never *would* learn French properly, although you've had me to practise on for so many years—not to mention Bob and Ida."

Leah. "How unkind of you, Barty! When have I had time to trouble about French? Besides, you always laugh at my French accent and mimic it—and *that's* not encouraging!"

Barty. "My dear, I *adore* your French accent: it's so unaffected! I only wish I heard it a little oftener."

Leah. "You shall hear it this afternoon. At what o'clock is he coming, your Monsieur Paroly?"

Barty. "At four-thirty."

Leah. "O Barty, *don't* give yourself away—don't talk to him about your writings, or about yourself, or about your family. He'll vulgarise you all over France. Surely you've not forgotten that nice 'gentleman' from America who came to see you, and who told you that *he* was no interviewer, not *he!* but came merely as a friend and admirer—a distant but constant worshipper for many years, and how you talked to him like a long-lost brother, in consequence! 'There's nobody in the world like the best Americans,' you said. You adored them *all*, and wanted to be an American yourself—till a month after, when he published every word you said, and more, and what sort of cravat you had on, and how silent and cold and uncommunicative your good, motherly English wife was—you, the brilliant and talkative Barty Josselin, who should have mated with a countrywoman of his own! and how your bosom friend was a huge, overgrown everyday Briton with a broken nose! *I* saw what he was at, from the low cunning in his face as he listened; and felt that every single unguarded word you dropped was a dollar in his pocket! How we've all had to live down that dreadfully facetious and grotesque and familiar article he printed about us all, in those twenty American newspapers that have got the largest circulation in the world! and how you stamped and raved, Barty, and swore that never another American 'gentleman' should enter your house! What names you called him: 'cad!' 'sweep!' 'low-bred little Yankee penny-a-liner!' Don't you remember? Why, he described you as a quite nice-looking man somewhat over the middle height!"

"Oh yes; damn him, *I* remember!" said Barty, who was three or four inches over six feet, and quite openly vain of his good looks.

Leah. "Well, then, pray be cautious with this Monsieur Paroly you think so much of because he's French. Let *him* talk—interview *him*—ask him all about his family if he's got one—his children, and all that; play a game of billiards with him—talk French politics—dance 'La Paladine'—make him laugh—make him smoke one of those strong Trichinopoli cigars Bob gave you for the tops of omnibuses—make him feel your biceps—teach him how to play cup and ball—give him a sketch—then bring him into tea. Madame Cornelys will be there, and Julia Ironsides, and Ida, who'll talk French by the

yard. Then we'll show him the St. Bernards and Minerva, and I'll give him an armful of Gloire de Dijon roses, and shake him warmly by the hand, so that he won't feel ill-natured towards us; and we'll get him out of the house as quick as possible."

Thus prepared, Barty awaited M. Paroly, and this is a free rendering of what M. Paroly afterwards wrote about him:—

"With a mixture of feelings difficult to analyse and define, I bade adieu to the sage and philosopher of Cheyne Row, and had myself transported in my hansom to the abode of the other great *sommité littéraire* in London, the light one—M. Josselin, to whom we in France also are so deeply in debt.

"After a longish drive through sordid streets we reached a bright historic vicinity and a charming hill, and my invisible Jehu guided me at the great trot by verdant country lanes. We turned through lodge gates into a narrow drive in a well kept garden where there was a lawn of English greenness, on which were children and nurses and many dogs, and young people who played at lawn-tennis.

"The door of the house was opened by a charming young woman in black with a white apron and cap, like a waitress at the Bouillon Duval, who guided me through a bright corridor full of pictures and panoplies, and then through a handsome studio to a billiard-room, where M. Josselin was playing at the billiard to himself all alone.

"M. Josselin receives me with jovial cordiality; he is enormously tall, enormously handsome, like a drum-major of the Imperial Guard, except that his lip and chin are shaved and he has slight whiskers; very well dressed, with thick curly hair, and regular features, and a singularly sympathetic voice: he is about thirty-five.

"I have to decline a game of billiards, and refuse a cigar, a very formidable cigar, very black and very thick and very long. I don't smoke, and am no hand at a cue. Besides, I want to talk about *Étoiles Mortes*, about *Les Trépassées de François Villon*, about *Déjanire et Dalila*!

"M. Josselin speaks French as he writes it, in absolute perfection; his mother, he tells me was from Normandy—the daughter of fisherfolk in Dieppe; he was at school in Paris, and has lived there as an art student.

"He does not care to talk about *Les Trépassées* or *Les Étoiles*, or any of his immortal works.

"He asks me if I'm a good swimmer, and can do *la coupe* properly; and leaning over his billiard-table he shows me how it ought to be done, and dilates on the merits of that mode of getting through the water. He confides to me that he suffers from a terrible nostalgia—a consuming desire to do *la coupe* in the swimming-baths of Passy against the current; to take a header *à la hussarde* with his eyes open and explore the bed of the Seine between Grenelle and the *Île des Cygnes*—as he used to do when he was a school-boy—and pick up mussels with his teeth.

"Then he explains to me the peculiar virtues of his stove, which is almost entirely an invention of his own, and shows me how he can regulate the heat of the room to the fraction of a degree centigrade, which he prefers to Fahrenheit—just as he prefers metres and centimetres to inches and feet—and ten to twelve!

"After this he performs some very clever tricks with billiard-balls; juggles three of them in each hand simultaneously, and explains to me that this is an exceptional achievement, as he only sees out of one eye, and that no acrobat living could do the same with one eye shut.

"I quite believe him, and wonder and admire, and his face beams with honest satisfaction—and this is the man who wrote *La quatrième Dimension*!

"Then he tells me some very funny French school-boy stories; he delights in my hearty laughter; they are capital stories, but I had heard them all before—when I was at school.

"‘And now, M. Josselin,’ I say, ‘à propos of that last story you’ve just told me; in the *Trépassés de François Villon* you have omitted “la très-sage Héloïse” altogether.’

"‘Oh, have I? How stupid of me!—Abélard and all that! Ah well—there’s plenty of time—nous allons arranger tout ça! All that sort of thing comes to me in the night, you know, when I’m half asleep in bed—a—a—I mean after lunch in the afternoon, when take my siesta.’

"Then he leads me into his studio and shows me pencil studies from the life, things of ineffable beauty of form and expression—things that haunt the memory.

"‘Show me a study for Déjanire,’ I say.

"‘Oh! I’ll draw Déjanire for you,’ and he takes a soft pencil and a piece of smooth cardboard, and in five minutes draws me an outline of a naked woman on a centaur’s back, a creature of touching beauty no other hand in the world could produce—so aristocratically delicately English and of to-day—so severely, so nobly and classically Greek. C’est la chasteté même—mais ce n’est pas Déjanire!

"He gives me this sketch, which I rechristen Godiva, and value as I value few things I possess.

"Then he shows me pencil studies of children’s heads, from nature, and I exclaim—

"‘O Heaven! what a dream of childhood! Childhood is never so beautiful as that.’

"‘Oh yes it is, in England, I assure you,’ says he. ‘I’ll show you my children presently; and you, have you any children?’

"‘Alas! no,’ I reply; ‘I am a bachelor.’

"I remark that from time to time, just as the moon veils itself behind a passing cloud, the radiance of his brilliant and jovial physiognomy is eclipsed by the expression of a sadness immense, mysterious, infinite; this is followed by a look of angelic candour and sweetness and gentle heroism, that moves you strangely, even to the heart, and makes appeal to all your warmest and deepest sym-

pathies—the look of a very masculine Joan of Arc! You don't know why, but you feel you would make any sacrifice for a man who looks at you like that, follow him to the death—lead a forlorn hope at his bidding.

"He does not exact from me anything so arduous as this, but passing round my neck his powerful arm, he says—

" 'Come and drink some tea; I should like to present you to my wife.'

"And he leads me through another corridor to a charming drawing-room that gives on to the green lawn of the garden.

"There are several people there taking tea.

"He presents me first to Madame Josselin. If the husband is



"HE PRESENTS ME FIRST TO MADAME JOSSELIN"

enormously handsome, the wife is a beauty absolutely divine; she, also, is very tall—*très élégante*; she has soft wavy black hair, and eyes and eyebrows *d'un noir de jais*, and a complexion *d'une blancheur de lis*, with just a point of carmine in the cheeks. She does not say much—she speaks French with difficulty; but she expresses with her smiling eyes so cordial and sincere a welcome that one feels glad to be in the same room with her, one feels it is a happy privilege; it does one good—one ceases to feel one may possibly be an intruder—one almost feels one is wanted there.

"I am then presented to three or four other ladies; and it would seem that the greatest beauties of London have given each other rendez-vous in Madame Josselin's salon—this London, where are to be found the most beautiful women in the world and the ugliest.

"First, I salute the Countess of Ironsides—ah, mon Dieu, la Diane chasserresse—la Sapho de Pradier! Then Madame Cornelys, the wife of the great sculptor, who lives next door—a daughter of the ancient gods of Greece! Then a magnificent blonde, an old friend of theirs, who speaks French absolutely like a Frenchwoman, and says thee and thou to M. Josselin, and introduces me to her brother, un vrai type de colosse bon enfant, d'une tenue irréprochable [thank you, M. Paroly], who also speaks the French of France, for he was at school there—a schoolfellow of our host.

"There are two or three children, girls, more beautiful than anything or anybody else in the house—in the world, I think! They give me tea and cakes, and bread and butter; most delicious tartines, as thin as wafers, and speak French well, and relate to me the biographies of their animals, une vraie ménagerie, which I afterwards have to visit—immense dogs, rabbits, hedgehogs, squirrels, white mice, and a gigantic owl, who answers to the name of Minerva.

"I find myself, ma foi, very happy among these wonderful people, and preserve an impression of beauty, of bonhomie, of naturalness and domestic felicity quite unlike anything I have ever been privileged to see—an impression never to be forgotten.

"But as for *Étoiles Mortes* and *Les Trépassées de Françoise Villon*, I really have to give them up; the beautiful big dogs are more important than all the books in the world, even the master's—even the master himself!

"However, I want no explanation to see and understand how M. Josselin has written most of his chefs-d'œuvre from the depths of a happy consciousness habituated to all that is most graceful and charming and seductive in real life—and a deeply sympathetic, poignant, and compassionate sense of the contrast to all this.

"Happy mortal, happy family, happy country where grow (poussent) such people, and where such children flourish! The souvenir of that so brief hour spent at Gretna Lodge is one of the most beautiful souvenirs of my life—and, above all, the souvenir of the belle châtelaine who filled my hansom with beautiful roses culled by her own fair hand, which gave me at parting that cordial English pressure so much more suggestive of *Au revoir* than *Adieu*!

"It is with sincere regret one leaves people who part with one so regretfully.

"ALPHONSE PAROLY."

Except that good and happy women have no history, I should almost like to write the history of Barty's wife, and call it the history of the busiest and most hard-working woman in Great Britain.

Barty left everything to her—the very signing of cheques. He would have nothing to do with business of any kind.

He wouldn't even carve at lunch or dinner. Leah did, unless I was there.

It is but fair to say he worked as hard as any man I know. When he was not writing or drawing, he was thinking about drawing or writing; when they got to Marsfield, he hardly ever stirred outside the grounds.

There he would garden with gardeners or cut down trees, or do carpenter's work at his short intervals of rest, or groom a horse.

How often have I seen him suddenly drop a spade or axe or saw or curry-comb, and go straight off to a thatched gazebo he had built himself, where writing materials were left, and write down the happy thought that had occurred; and then, pipe in mouth, back to his gardening and rest!

I also had a gazebo close to his, where I read blue-books and wrote my endless correspondence with the help of a secretary—only too glad, both of us, to be disturbed by festive and frolicsome young Bartys of either sex—by their dogs—by their mother!

Leah's province it was to attend to all the machinery by which life was carried on in this big house, and social intercourse, and the education of the young, and endless hospitalities.

She would even try to coach her boys in Latin and Euclid during their preparation times for the school where they spent the day, two miles off. Such Latin! such geometry! She could never master the ablative absolute, nor what used to be called at Brossard's *le que retranché*, nor see the necessity of demonstrating by $A + B$ what was sufficiently obvious to her without.

"Who helps you in your Latin, my boy?" says the master, with a grin.

"My father," says Geoffrey, too loyal to admit it was his mother who had coached him wrong.

"Ah, I suppose he helps you with your Euclid also?" says the master, with a broader grin still.

"Yes, sir," says Geoffrey.

"Your father's French, I suppose?"

"I dare say, sir," says Geoffrey.

"Ah, I thought so!"

All of which was very unfair to Barty, whose Latin, like that of most boys who have been brought up at a French school, was probably quite as good as the English schoolmaster's own, except for its innocence of quantities; and Blanchet and Legendre are easier to learn than Euclid, and stick longer in the memory; and Barty remembered well.

Then, besides the many friends who came to the pleasant house to stay, or else for lunch or tea or dinner, there were pious pilgrims from all parts of the world, as to a shrine—from Paris, from Germany, Italy, Norway, and Sweden; from America especially. Leah had to play the hostess almost every day of her life, and show off her lion, and make him roar and wag his tail and stand on his hind-legs—a lion that was not always in the mood to tumble and be shown off, unless the pilgrims were pretty and of the female sex.

Barty was a man's man par excellence, and loved to forgather with men. The only men he couldn't stand were those we have agreed to call in modern English the Philistines and the prigs—or both combined, as they can sometimes be; and this objection of his would have considerably narrowed his circle of male acquaintances but that the Philistines and the prigs, who so detest each other, were so dotingly fond of Barty, and ran him to earth in Marsfield.

The Philistines loved him for his world-wide popularity—the prigs in spite of it! They loved him for himself alone—because they couldn't help it, I suppose—and lamented over him as over a fallen angel.

He was happiest of all with the good denizens of Bohemia, who have known want and temptation, and come unscathed out of the fire, but with their affections and insincerities and conventionalities all burnt away.

Good old Bohemia—*alma mater dolorosa*; stern old grey she-wolf with the dry teats—*marâtre au cœur de pierre*! It is not a bad school in which to graduate, if you can do so without loss of principle or sacrifice of the delicate bloom of honour and self-respect.

Next to these I think he loved the barbarians he belonged to on his father's side, who whatever their faults, are seldom prigs or Philistines; and then he loved the proletarians, who had good, straightforward manners and no pretension—the labourer, the skilled artisan, especially the toilers of the sea.

In spite of his love of his own sex, he was of the kind that can go to the devil for a pretty woman.

He did not do this; he married one instead, fortunately for himself and for his children and for her, and stuck to her and preferred her society to any other society in the world. Her mere presence seemed to have an extraordinarily soothing influence on him; it was as though life were short, and he could never see enough of her in the allotted time and space; the chronic necessity of her nearness to him became a habit and a second nature—like his pipe he would say.

Still, he was such a slave to his own æsthetic eye and ever-youthful heart that the sight of lovely women pleased him more than the sight of anything else on earth; he delighted in her proximity, in the rustle of her garments, in the sound of her voice; and lovely woman's instinct told her this, so that she was very fond of Barty in return.

He was especially popular with sweet, pretty young girls, to whom his genial, happy, paternal manner always endeared him. They felt as safe with Barty as with any father or uncle, for all his facetious love-making; he made them laugh, and they loved him for it, and they forgot his Apolloship, and his Lionhood, and his general Immensity, which he never remembered himself.

It is to be feared that women who lacked the heavenly gift of good looks did not interest him quite so much, whatever other gifts they might possess, unless it were the gift of making lovely music. The little brown nightingale outshone the brilliant bird of paradise if she were a true nightingale; if she were very brown indeed, he would

shut his eyes and listen with all his ears, rapt, as in a heavenly dream. And the closed lids would moisten, especially the lid that hid the eye that couldn't see—the emotional one!—although he was the least lachrymose of men, since it was with such a dry eye he wrote what I could scarcely read for my tears.

But his natural kindliness and geniality made him always try and please those who tried to please him, beautiful or the reverse, whether they succeeded or not; and he was just as popular with the ducks and geese as with the swans and peacocks and nightingales and birds of paradise. The dull, commonplace dames who prosed and buzzed and bored, the elderly intellectual virgins who knew nothing of life but what they had read—or written—in "Tendenz" novels, yet sadly rebuked him, more in sorrow than in anger, for this passage or that in his books, about things out of their ken altogether, &c.

His playfull amenity disarmed the most aggressive blue-stocking, orthodox or Unitarian, Catholic or Hebrew—radicals, agnostics, vegetarians, teetotalers, anti-vaccinationists, anti-vivisectionists—even anti-things that don't concern decent women at all, whether married or single.

It was only when his privacy was invaded by some patronising, loud-voiced *nouvelle-riche* with a low-bred physiognomy that no millions on earth could gild or refine, and manners to match; some foolish, fashionable, would-be worldling, who combined the arch little coquetries and impertinent affectations of a spoilt beauty with the ugliness of an Aztec or an Esquimau; some silly, titled old frump, who frankly ignored his tea-making wife and daughters, and talked to *him* only—and only about her grotesque and ugly self—and told him of all the famous painters who had wanted to paint her for the last hundred years—it was only then he grew glum and reserved and depressed, and made an unfavourable impression on the other sex.

What it must have cost him not to express his disgust more frankly! for reticence on any matter was almost a torture to him.

Most of us have a mental sanctum to which we retire at times, locking the door behind us; and there we think of high beautiful things, and hold commune with our Maker; or count our money, or improvise that repartee the gods withheld last night, and shake hands with ourselves for our wit; or caress the thought of some darling, secret wickedness or vice; or revel in dreams of some hidden hate, or some love we mustn't own; and curse those we have to be civil to whether we like them or not, and nurse our little envies till we almost get to like them.

There we remember all the stupid and unkind things we've ever said or thought or done, and all the slights that have ever been put on us, and secretly plan the revenge that never comes off—because time has softened our hearts, let us hope, when opportunity serves at last!

That Barty had no such holy of holies to creep into I feel pretty sure—unless it was the wifely heart of Leah; whatever came into his

head came straight out of his mouth; he had nothing to conceal, and thought aloud, for all the world to hear; and it does credit, I think, to the singular goodness and guilelessness of his nature that he could afford to be so outspoken through life and yet give so little offence to others as he did. His indiscretion did very little harm, and his naïve self-revelation only made him the more lovable to those who knew him well.

They were poor creatures, the daws who pecked at that manly heart, so stanch and warm and constant.

As for Leah, it was easy to see that she looked upon her husband as a fixed star, and was well pleased to tend and minister and revolve and shine with no other light than his; it was in reality an absolute adoration on her part. But she very cleverly managed to hide it from him; she was not the kind of woman that makes a door-mat of herself for the man she loves. She kept him in very good order indeed.

It was her theory that female adoration is not good for masculine vanity, and that he got quite enough of it outside his own home; and she would make such fun of him and his female adorers all over the world that he grew to laugh at them himself, and to value a pat on the back and a hearty "Well done, Barty!" from his wife more than

"The blandishments of all the womankind
In Europe and America combined."

Gentle and kind and polite as she was, however, she could do battle in defence of her great man, who was so backward at defending himself; and very effective battle too.

As an instance among many, illustrating her method of warfare: Once at an important house a very immense personage (who had an eye for a pretty woman) had asked to be introduced to her and had taken her down to supper; a very immense personage indeed, whose fame had penetrated to the uttermost ends of the earth, and deservedly made his name a beloved household word wherever our tongue is spoken, so that it was in every Englishman's mouth all over the world—as Barty's is now.

Leah was immensely impressed, and treated his elderly Immensity to a very full measure of the deference that was his due; and such open homage is not always good for even the Immensest Immen-sities—it sometimes makes them give themselves immense airs. So that this particular Immensity began mildly but firmly to patronise Leah. This she didn't mind on her own account, but when he said, quite casually, "By-the-way, I forget if I *know* your good husband; *do* I?"—she was not pleased, and immediately answered, "I really can't say; I don't think I ever heard him mention your name!"

This was not absolutely veracious on Leah's part; for to Barty in those days this particular great man was a god, and he was always full of him. But it brought the immense one back to his bearings at once, and he left off patronising, and was almost humble.

Anyhow, it was a lie so white that the recording angel will probably delete what there is of it with a genial smile, and leave a little blank in its place.

In an old diary of Leah's I find the following entry:—

"*March, 6th, 1874.*—Mamma and Ida Scatterd came to stay. In the evening our sixth daughter and eighth child was born."

Julia (Mrs. Mainwaring) was this favoured person—and is still. Julia and her predecessors have all lived and flourished up to now.



"I DON'T THINK I EVER HEARD HIM MENTION YOUR NAME"

The Josselins had been exceptionally fortunate in their children; each new specimen seemed an even finer specimen than the last. The health of this remarkable family had been exemplary—measles, and mumps, and whooping-cough their only ailments.

During the month of Leah's confinement Barty's nocturnal literary activity was unusually great. Night after night he wrote in his sleep, and accumulated enough raw material to last him a life-time, for the older he grew, and the more practised his hand, the longer it took him to give his work the shape he wished; he became more fastidious year by year as he became less of an amateur.

One morning, a day or two before his wife's complete recovery, he found a long personal letter from Martia by his bedside—a letter that

moved him very much and gave him food for thought during many weeks and months and years:—

“MY BELOVED BARTY,—The time has come at last when I must bid you farewell.

“I have outstayed my proper welcome on earth as a disembodied conscience by just a hundred years, and my desire for reincarnation has become an imperious passion not to be resisted.

“It is more than a desire—it is a duty as well, a duty far too long deferred.

“Barty, I am going to be your next child. I can conceive no greater earthly felicity than to be a child of yours and Leah’s. I should have been one long ago, but that you and I have had so much to do together for this beautiful earth—a great debt to pay: you, for being as you are; I, for having known you.

“Barty, you have no conception what you are to me, and always have been.

“I am to you but a name, a vague idea, a mysterious inspiration; sometimes a questionable guide, I fear. You don’t even believe all I have told you about myself—you think it all a somnambulistic invention of your own; and so does your wife, and so does your friend.

“Oh, that I could connect myself in your mind with the shape I wore when I was last a living thing! No shape on earth, not either yours or Leah’s or that of any child yet born to you both, is more beautiful to the eye that has learned how to see than the fashion of that lost face and body of mine.

“*You* wore the shape once, and so did your father and mother, for you were Martians. Leah was a Martian, and wore it too; there are many of them here—they are the best on earth, the very salt thereof. I mean to be the best of them all, and one of the happiest. Oh, help me to that!

“Barty, when I am a splendid son of yours or a sweet and lovely daughter, all remembrance of what I was before will have been wiped out of me until I die. But *you* will remember, and so will Leah, and both will love me with such a love as no earthly parents have ever felt for any child of theirs yet.

“Think of the poor loving soul, lone, wandering, but not lost, that will so trustfully look up at you out of those gleeful innocent eyes!

“How that soul has suffered both here and elsewhere you don’t know, and never will, till the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed; and I am going to forget it myself for a few decades—sixty, seventy, eighty years perhaps; such happy years, I hope—with you for my father and Leah for my mother during some of them at least—and sweet grandchildren of yours, I hope, for my sons and daughters! Why, life to me now will be almost a holiday.

“Oh, train me up the way I should go! Bring me up to be healthy and chaste and strong and brave—never to know a mean ambition

or think an ungenerous thought—never to yield to a base or unworthy temptation.

"If I'm a boy—and I want to be a boy very much (although, perhaps, a girl would be dearer to your heart)—don't let me be either a soldier or a sailor, however much I may wish it as a Josselin or a Rohan; don't bring me up to buy or sell like a Gibson, or deal in law like a Bletchley.

"Bring me up to invent, or to make something useful, if it's only pickles or soap, but not to buy and sell them; bring me up to build or heal or paint or write or make music—to help or teach or please.

"If I'm a girl, bring me up to be as much like Leah as you can, and marry me to just such another as yourself, if you can find him. Whether I'm a girl or a boy, call me Marty, that my name may rhyme with yours.

"When my conscience re-embodies itself, I want it never to know another pang of self-reproach. And when I'm grown up, if you think it right to do so, tell me who and what I once was, that I may love you both the more; tell me how fondly I loved you when I was a bland and fleeting little animalcule, without body, but making my home in yours—so that when you die I may know how irrevocably bound up together we must for ever be, we three; and rejoice the more in your death and Leah's and my own. Teach me over again all I've ever taught you, Barty—over and over again!

"Alas! perhaps you don't believe all this! How can I give you a sign?

"There are many ways; but a law of necessity inexorable, forbids it. Such little entity as I possess would cease to be; it was all but lost when I saved your life—and again when I told you that you were the beloved of Julia Royce. It would not do for us Martians to meddle with earthly things; the fat would soon be in the fire, I can tell you!

"Try and trust me, Barty, and give me the benefit of any doubt.

"You have work planned out for many years to come, and are now yourself so trained that you can do without me. You know what you have still to say to mankind; never write a line about which you are not sure.

"For another night or two you will be my host, and this splendid frame of yours my hostelry; on y est très bien. Be hospitable still for a little while—make the most of me; hug me tight, squceze me warin!

"As soon as Leah is up and about and herself again you will know me no more, and no more feel the north.

"Ah! you will never realise what it is for me to bid you good-bye, my Barty, my Barty! All that is in your big heart and powerful brain to feel of grief belongs to me, now that you are fast asleep. And your genius for sorrow, which you have never really tested yet, is as great as any gift you possess.

"Happy Barty, who have got to forty years without sounding the great depths, and all through me! what will you do without your poor devoted unknown Martia to keep watch over you and ward—to fight for you like a wild-cat, if necessary?

"Leah must be your wild-cat now. She has it in her to be a tigress when you are concerned, or any of her children! Next to you, Leah is the darling of my heart; for it's your heart I make use of to love her with.

"I want you to tell the world all about your Martia some day. They may disbelieve, as you do; but good fruit will come of it in the future. Martians will have a freer hand with you all, and that will be a good thing for the earth; they were trained in a good hard school—they are the Spartans of our universe.

"Such things will come to pass, before many years are over, as are little dreamt of now, and all through your wanting to swallow that dose of cyanide at No. 36 Rue des Ursulines Blanches, and my having the gumption to prevent you!

"It's a good seed that we have sown, you and I. It was not right that this beautiful planet should go much longer drifting through space without a single hope of what life should really be, without a goal.

"Why such darkness under so bright a sun! such blindness to what is so patent! such a deaf ear to the roaring of that thunderous harmony which you call the eternal silence!—you of the earth, earthy, who can hear the little trumpet of the mosquito so well that it makes you fidget and fret and fume all night, and robs you of your rest. Then the sun rises and frightens the mosquitoes away, and you think that's what the sun is for and are thankful; but why the deuce a mosquito should sting you, you can't make out!—mystery of mysteries!

"At the back of your brain is a little speck of perishable matter, Barty; it is no bigger than a needle's point, but it is bigger in you than in anybody else I know, except in Leah; and in your children it is bigger still—almost as big as the point of a pin!

"If they pair well—and it is in them to do so if they follow their inherited instinct—their children and their children's children will have that speck still bigger. When that speck becomes as big as a millet-seed in your remote posterity, then it will be as big as in a Martian, and the earth will be a very different place, and man of earth greater and even better than the Martian by all the greatness of his ampler, subtler, and more complex brain; his sense of the Deity will be as an eagle's sense of the sun at noon in a cloudless tropical sky; and he will know how to bear that effulgence without a blink, as he stands on his lonely summit, ringed by the azure world.

"Indeed, there will be no more Martians in Mars by that time; they are near the end of their lease; all good Martians will have gone to Venus, let us hope; if not, to the Sun itself!

"Man has many thousands of years before him yet ere his little ball of earth gets too cold for him: the little speck in his brain may grow to the size of a pea, a cherry, a walnut, an egg, an orange! He will have in him the magnetic consciousness of the entire solar system, and hold the keys of time and space as long and as far as the sun shines for us all—and then there will be the beginning of every-

thing. And all through that little episode in the street of those White Ursulines! And the seed of Barty and Leah will overflow to the uttermost ends of the earth, and finally blossom and bear fruit for ever and ever beyond the stars.

"What a beginning for a new order of things! what a getting up-stairs! what an awakening! what an annunciation!

"Do you remember that knock at the door?

"*'Il est dix heures, savez-vous? Voulez-vous votre café dans votre chambre?'*

"She little knew, poor little Frau! humble little Finche Torfs, lowly Flemish virgin, who loved you as the moth loves the star; vilain mangeur de cœurs que vous êtes!

"Barty, I wish your wife to hear nothing of this till the child who once was your Martia shall have seen the light of day with eyes of its own; tell her that I have left you at last, but don't tell her why or how; tell her some day, years hence, if you think she will love me the better for it; not otherwise.

"When you awake, Barty, I shall still be inside you; say to me in your *mezza voce* all the kind things you can think of—such things as you would have said to your mother had she lived till now, and you were speeding her on a long and uncertain journey.

"How you would have loved your mother! She was most beautiful, and of the type so dear to you. Her skin was almost as white as Leah's, her eyes almost as black, her hair even blacker; like Leah, she was tall and slim and lithe and graceful. She might have been Leah's mother, too, for the likeness between them. How often you remind me of her when you laugh or sing, and when you're funny in French; those droll, quick gestures and quaint intonations, that ease and freedom and deftness as you move! And then you become English in a moment, and your big, burly, fair-haired father has come back with his high voice, and his high spirits, and his frank blue eyes, like yours, so kind and brave and genial.

"And you, dear, what a baby you were—a very prince among babies; ah! if I can only be like that when I begin again!

"The people in the Tuileries garden used to turn round and stare and smile at you when Rosalie, with the long blue streamers, bore you along as proudly as if Louis Philippe were your grandfather and she the royal wet-nurse; and later, after that hideous quarrel about nothing, and the fatal fight by the *'mare aux biches'*, how the good fisher people of Le Pollet adored you! *'Un vrai petit St. Jean! il nous portera bonheur, bien sûr!'*

"You have been thoroughly well loved all your life, my Barty, but most of all by me—never forget that!

"I have been your father and mother when they sat and watched your baby-sleep; I have been Rosalie when she gave you the breast; I have been your French grandfather and grandmother quarrelling as to which of the two should nurse you as they sat and sunned themselves on their humble doorstep in the Rue des Guignes!

"I have been your doting wife when you sang to her, your children when you made them laugh till they cried. I've been Lady Archibald when you danced the Dieppoise after tea, in Dover, with your little bare legs; and Aunt Caroline, too, as she nursed you in Malines after that silly duel where you behaved so well; and I've been by turns Mérovée Brossard, Bonzig, old Laferté, Mlle. Marceline, Finche Torfs, poor little Marianina, Julia Royce, Father Louis, the old Abbé, Bob Maurice—all the people you've ever charmed, or amused, or been kind to—a legion; good heavens! I have been them all! What a snowball made up of all these loves I've been rolling after you all these years! and now it has all got to melt away in a single night, and with it the remembrance of all I've ever been during ages untold.

"And I've no voice to bid you good-bye, my beloved; no arms to hug you with, no eyes to weep—I, a daughter of the most affectionate, and clinging, and caressing race of little people in existence! Such eyes as I once had, too; such warm, soft, furry arms, and a voice—it would have wanted no words to express all that I feel now; that voice—*nous savons notre orthographe en musique là bas!*

"How it will please, perhaps, to remember even this farewell some day; when we're all together again, with nothing to come between!

"And now, my beloved, there is no such thing as good-bye; it is a word that has no real meaning; but it is so English and pretty and sweet and child-like and nonsensical that I could write it over and over again—just for fun!

"So good-bye! good-bye! good-bye! till I wake up once more after a long living sleep of many years, I hope; a sleep filled with happy dreams of you, dear, delightful people, whom I've got to live with and love, and learn to lose once more: and then—no more good-byes!

MARTIA."

So much for Martia—whoever or whatever it was that went by that name in Barty's consciousness.

After such close companionship for so many years, the loss of her—or it—was like the loss of a sixth and most valuable sense, worse almost than the loss of his sight would have been; and with this the was constantly threatened, for he most unmercifully taxed his remaining eye, and the field of his vision had narrowed year by year.

But this impending calamity did not frighten him as in the old days. His wife was with him now, and as long as she was by his side he could have borne anything—blindness, poverty, dishonour—anything in the world. If he lost her, he would survive the loss just long enough to put his affairs in order, and no more.

But most distressfully he missed the physical feeling of the north—even in his sleep. This strange bereavement drew him and Leah even more closely together, if that were possible; and she was well content to reign alone in the heart of her fractious, unreasonable, but most affectionate, humorous and irresistible man. Although her

rival had been but a name and an idea, a mere abstraction in which she had never really believed, she did not find it altogether displeasing to herself that the lively Martia was no more; she has almost told me as much.

And thus began for them the happiest and most beautiful period of their joint lives, in spite of sorrows yet to come. She took such care of him that he might have been as blind as Belisarius himself, and he seemed almost to depend upon her as much—so wrapped up was he in the work of his life, so indifferent to all mundane and practical affairs. What eyesight was not wanted for his pen and pencil he reserved to look at her with—at his beloved children, and the things of beauty in and outside Marsfield: pictures, old china, skies, hills, trees, and river; and what wits remained he kept to amuse his family and his friends—there was enough to spare.

The older he grew the more he teemed and seethed and bubbled and shone, and set others shining round him—even myself. It is no wonder Marsfield became such a singularly agreeable abode for all who dwelt there, even for the men-servants and the maid-servants, and the birds and the beasts, and the stranger within its gates—and for me a kind of earthly paradise.

* * * * *

And now, gentle reader, I want very badly to talk about myself a little, if you don't mind—just for half-a-dozen pages or so, which you can skip if you like. Whether you do or not, it will not hurt you—and it will do me a great deal of good.

I feel uncommonly sad, and very lonely indeed, now that Barty is gone; and with him my beloved comrade Leah.

The only people left to me that I'm really fond of—except my dear widowed sister, Ida Scatcherd—are all so young. They're Josselins, of course—one and all—and they're all that's kind and droll and charming, and I adore them. But they can't quite realise what this sort of bereavement means to a man of just my age, who has still got some years of life before him, probably—and is yet an old man.

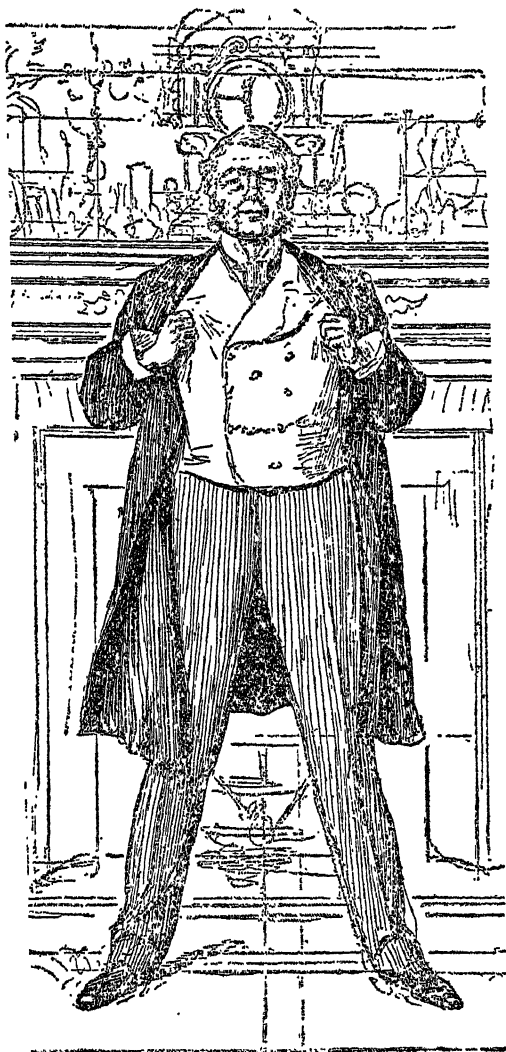
The Right Honourable Sir Robert Maurice, Bart., M.P., &c., &c., &c. That's me. I take up a whole line of manuscript. I might be a noble lord if I chose, and take up two!

I'm a liberal conservative, an opportunist, a pessi-optimist, an im-medio-tutissimist, and attend divine service at the Temple Church.

I'm a Philistine, and not ashamed; so was Molière—so was Cervantes. So, if you like, was the late Martin Farquhar Tupper—and those who read him; we're of all sorts in Philistia, the great and the small, the good and the bad.

I'm in the sixties—sound of wind and limb—only two false teeth—one at each side, bicuspid, merely for show. I'm rather bald, but it suits my style; a little fat, perhaps—a pound and a half over sixteen stone! but I'm an inch and a half over six feet, and very big-boned. Altogether, *diablement bien conservé*! I sleep well, the sleep of the

just; I have a good appetite and a good digestion, and a good conceit of myself still, thank Heaven—though nothing like what I used to be! One can survive the loss of one's self-respect; but of one's vanity, never. What a prosperous and happy life mine has been, to be sure, up



"I'M A PHILISTINE, AND NOT ASHAMED"

to a few short months ago—hardly ever an ache or a pain!—my only real griefs, my dear mother's death ten years back, and my father's in 1870. Yes, I have warmed both hands at the fire of life, and even burnt my fingers now and then, but not severely.

One love disappointment. The sting of it lasted a couple of years, the compensation more than thirty! I loved her all the better, perhaps, that I did not marry her. I'm afraid it is not in me to love a very good wife of my own as much as I really ought!

And I love her children as well as if they had been mine, and her grandchildren even better. They are irresistible, these grandchildren of Barty's and Leah's—mine wouldn't have been a patch on them; beside, I get all the fun and none of the bother and anxiety. Evidently it was my true vocation to remain single—and be a tame cat in a large, warm house, where there are lots of nice children.

O happy Bob Maurice! O happy sexagenarian!

"O me fortunatum, mea si bona nôrim!" (What would Père Brossard say at this? he would give me a twisted pinch on the arm—and serve me right!)

I'm very glad I've been successful, though it's not a very high achievement to make a very large fortune by buying and selling that which put into a man's mouth is said to steal away his brains!

But it does better things than this. It reconciles and dissolves and solves and resolves mental discords, like music. It makes music for people who have no ear—and there are so many of these in the world that I'm a millionaire, and Franz Schubert died a pauper. So I prefer to drink beer—as *he* did; and I never miss a Monday Pop if I can help it.

I have done better things, too. I have helped to govern my country and make its laws; but it all came out of wine to begin with—all from learning to buy and sell! We're a nation of shopkeepers, although the French keep better shops than ours, and more of them.

I'm glad I'm successful because of Barty, although success, which brings the world to our feet, does not always endear us to the friend of our bosom. If I had been a failure Barty would have stuck to me like a brick, I feel sure, instead of my sticking to him like a leech! And the sight of his success might have soured me—that eternal chorus of praise, that perpetual feast of pudding in which I should have had no part but to take my share as a mere guest, and listen and look on and applaud, and wish I'd never been born!

As it is, I listened and looked on and clapped my hands with as much pride and pleasure as if Barty had been my son—and my share of the pudding never stuck in my throat!

I should have been always on the watch to take him down a peg when he was pleased with himself—to hold him cheap and over-praise some duffer in his hearing—so that I might save my self-esteem; to pay him bad little left-handed compliments, him and his, whenever I was out of humour; and I should have been always out of humour, having failed in life.

And then I should have gone home wretched—for I have a conscience—and woke up in the middle of the night and thought of Barty; and what a kind, genial, jolly, large-minded, and generous-hearted old chap he was and always had been—and buried my face in my pillow and muttered—

"Ach! what a poor, mean, jealous beast I am—un fruit sec! malheureux raté!"

With all my success, this lifelong exclusive cultivation of Barty's society, and that of his artistic friends, which has somehow unfitted me for the society of my brother-merchants of wine—and most merchants of everything else—has not, I regret to say, quite fitted me to hold my own among the "leaders of intellectual modern thought," whose company I would fain seek and keep in preference to any other.

My very wealth seems to depress and disgust them, as it does me—and I'm no genius, I admit, and a poor conversationalist.

To amass wealth is an engrossing pursuit—and now that I have amassed a good deal more than I quite know what to do with, it seems to me a very ignoble one. It chokes up everything that makes life worth living; it leaves so little time for the constant and regular practice of those ingenuous arts which faithfully to have learnt is said to soften the manners, and make one an agreeable person all round.

It is even more *abrutissant* than the mere pursuit of sport or pleasure.

How many a noble lord I know who's almost as beastly rich as myself, and twice as big a fool by nature, and perhaps not a better fellow at bottom—yet who can command the society of all there is of the best in science, literature, and art!

Not but what they will come and dine with me fast enough, these shining lights of culture and intellect—my food is very good, although I say it, and I get noble lords to meet them.

But they talk their real talk to each other—not to me—and to the noble lords who sit by them at my table, and who try to understand what they say. With me they fall back on politics and bimetallism, for all the pains I've taken to get up the subjects that interest them, and keep myself posted in all they've written and done. Precious little they know about bimetallism or politics!

Is it only on account of their pretty manners that my titled friends are such favourites with these highly-intellectual guests of mine—and with me? If so, then pretty manners should come before everything else in the world, and be taught instead of Latin and Greek.

But if it's only because they are noble lords, then I'm beginning to think with Mr. Labouchere that it's high time the Upper House were abolished, and its denizens wafted into space, since they make such snobs of us all—including your humble servant, of course, who at least is not quite so snobbish as to know himself for a damned snob and pretend he isn't one.

Anyhow, I'm glad my life has been such a success. But would I live it all over again? Even the best of it? The "forty year"?

Taking one consideration with another, most decidedly not.

I have only met two men of my own age who would live their lives over again. They both cared more for their meals than for anything else in the world—and they have always had four of these every day; sometimes even five! plenty of variety, and never a

meal to disagree with them! *affaire d'estomac*! They simply want to eat all those meals once more. They lived to feed, and to re-feed would re-live!

My meals have never disagreed with me either—but I have always found them monotonous; they have always been so simple and so regular when I've had the ordering of them! Fried soles, chops or steaks, and that sort of thing, and a pint of lager-beer—no wine for me, thank you; I sell it—and all this just to serve as a mere foundation for a smoke—and a chat with Barty, if possible!

Hardly ever an ache or a pain, and I wouldn't live it all over again! yet I hope to live another twenty years, if only to take Leah's unborn great-grandchildren to the dentist's, and tip them at school, and treat them to the pantomime and Madame Tussaud's, as I did their mothers and grandmothers before them—or their fathers and grandfathers.

This seems rather inconsistent! For would I care, twenty years hence, to re-live these coming twenty years? Evidently not—it's out of the question.

So why don't I give up at once? I know how to do it, without pain, without scandal, without even invalidating my life-insurance, about which I don't care a rap!

Why don't I? why don't *you*, O middle-aged reader—with all the infirmities of age before you and all the pleasures of youth behind? Anyhow, we don't, either you or I—and so there's an end on't.

O Pandora! I have promised myself that I would take a great-grandchild of Barty's on a flying machine from Marsfield to London and back in half-an-hour—and that great-grandchild can't well be born for several years—perhaps not for another twenty!

And now, gentle reader, I've had my little say, and I'm a good deal better, thanks, and I'll try not to talk about myself any more.

Except just to mention that in the summer of 1876 I contested East Rosherville in the Conservative interest and was successful—and owed my success to the canvassing of Barty and Leah, who had no politics of their own whatever, and would have canvassed for me just as conscientiously if I'd been a Radical, probably more so! For if Barty had permitted himself any politics at all, he would have been a red-hot Radical, I fear—and his wife would have followed suit. And so, perhaps, would I!

PART TENTH

"Je suis allé de bon matin
Cueillir la violette,
Et l'aubépine, et le jasmin,
Pour célébrer ta fête.
J'ai lié de ma propre main
Bouton de rose et rosmarin
Pour couronner ta blonde tête.

Mais de ta royale beauté
Sois humble, je te prie.
Ici tout meurt, la fleur, l'été,
La jeunesse et la vie:
Bientôt, bientôt ce jour sera,
Ma belle, où l'on te portera
Dans un linceul pâle et flétri."

—*A Favourite Song of MARY TREVOR'S.*

THAT was a pleasant summer.

First of all we went to Ste. Adresse, a suburb of Hâvre, where there is very good bathing—with rafts, *périssaires*, *pique-têtes* to dive from—all those aquatic delights the French are so clever at inventing, and which make a "station balnéaire" so much more amusing than a mere British watering-place.

We made a very large party and bathed together every morning; and Barty and I taught the young ones to dive and do "la coupe" in the true orthodox form, with that free horizontal sweep of each alternate arm that gives it such distinction.

It was very good fun to see those rosy boys and girls taking their "hussardes" neatly without a splash from the little platform at the top of the pole, and solemnly performing "la coupe" in the wake of their papa; one on his back. Right out to sea they went, I bringing up the rear—and the faithful Jean-Baptiste in attendance with his boat, and Leah inside it—her anxious eyes on the stretch to count those curly heads again and again. She was a good mathematician, and the tale always came right in the end; and home was reached at last, and no one a bit the worse for a good long swim in those well-aired, sunlit waves.

Once we went on the top of the diligence to Étretat for the day, and there we talked of poor Bonzig and his first and last dip in the sea; and did "la coupe" in the waters that had been so fatal to him, poor fellow!

Then we went by steamer *Jean Bart* to Trouville and Deauville, and up the Seine in a steam-launch to Rouen.

In the afternoons and evenings we took long country walks and caught moths, or went to Hâvre by tramway, and cleared out all the pastry-cooks in the Rue de Paris, and watched the transatlantic steamers, out or home, and from that gay pier which so happily com-

bines business with pleasure—*utile dulci*, as Père Brossard would have said—and walked home by the charming Côte d'Ingouville, sacred to the memory of Modeste Mignon.

And then a little later on, I was good Uncle Bob, and took the whole party to Auteuil, near Paris, and hired two lordly mansions next door to each other in the Villa Montmorency, and turned their gardens into one.

Altogether, with the Scatcherds and ourselves, eight children, governesses, nurses, and other servants, and dogs and the smaller animals, we were a very large party, and a very lively one. I like this sort of thing better than anything else in the world.

I hired carriages and horses galore, and for six weeks we made ourselves thoroughly comfortable and at home in Paris and around.

That was the happiest holiday I ever had since the vacation Barty and I spent at the Lafertés' in the Gué des Aulnes when we were school-boys.

And such was our love for the sport he called "*la chasse aux souvenirs*" that one day we actually went there, travelling by train to La Tremblaye, where we spent the night.

It was a sad disenchantment!

The old Lafertés were dead, the young ones had left that part of the country; and the house and what remained of the gardens now belonged to another family, and had become formal and mean and business-like in aspect, and much reduced in size.

Much of the outskirts of the forest had been cleared and was being cleared still, and cheap little houses run up for workmen; an immense and evil-smelling factory with a tall chimney had replaced the old home-farm, and was connected by a single line of rails with the station of La Tremblaye. The clear, pellucid stream where we used to catch crayfish had been canalised—"s'est encanaillé," as Barty called it—its waters fouled by barge traffic and all kinds of horrors.

We soon found the haunted pond that Barty was so fond of—but quite in the open, close to an enormous brick-field, and only half full; and with all its trees cut down, including the tree on which they had hanged the gay young Viscount who had behaved so badly to Séraphine Doucet, and on which Séraphine Doucet afterwards hanged herself in remorse.

No more friendly charcoal burners, no more wolves or boars or cerfs—*dix-cors*; and as for were-wolves, the very memory of them had died out.

There seems no greater desecration to me than cutting down an old and well-remembered French forest I have loved; and solving all its mystery, and laying bare the nakedness of the land in a way so brutal and expeditious and unexpected. It reminds one of the manner in which French market-women will pluck a goose before it's quite dead; you bristle with indignation to see it, but you mustn't interfere.

La Tremblaye itself had become a flourishing manufacturing town, and to our jaundiced and disillusioned eyes everybody and

everything was as ugly as could be—and I can't say we made much of a bag in the way of souvenirs.

We were told that young Laferté was a barrister at Angers, prosperous and married. We deliberated whether we would hunt him up and talk of old times. Then we reflected how curiously cold and inhospitable Frenchmen can sometimes be to old English friends in circumstances like these—and how little they cared to talk of old times and all that, unless it's the Englishman who plays the host.

Ask a quite ordinary Frenchman to come and dine with you in London, and see what a genial and charming person he can be—what a quick bosom friend, and with what a glib and silver tongue to praise the warmth of your British welcome.

Then go and call on him when you find yourself in Paris—and you will soon learn to leave quite ordinary Frenchmen alone, on their own side of the Channel.

Happily there are exceptions to this rule.

Thus the sweet Laferté remembrance, which had so often come back to me in my dreams, was for ever spoiled by this unlucky trip.

It had turned that leaf from the tablets of my memory into a kind of palimpsest, so that I could no longer quite make out the old handwriting for the new, which would not be obliterated, and these were confused lines it was hard to read between—with all my skill!

Altogether we were uncommonly glad to get back to the Villa Montmorency—from the distorted shadows of a nightmare to happy reality.

There, all was fresh and delightful; as boys we had often seen the outside walls of that fine property which had come to the speculative builder at last, but never a glimpse within; so that there was no desecration for us in the modern laying out of that beautiful double garden of ours, whatever there might have been for such ghosts of Montmorencys as chose to revisit the glimpse of the moon.

We haunted Auteuil, Passy, Point du Jour, Suresnes, Courbevoie, Neuilly, Meudon—all the familiar places. Especially we haunted the neighbourhood of the rond point de l'Avenue du Bois de Boulogne.

One afternoon, as he and I and Leah and Ida were driving round what was once our old school, we stopped in the lane not far from the porte-cochère, and Barty stood up on the box and tried to look over the wall.

Presently, from the grand stone loge which had replaced Jaurion's den, a nice old concierge came out and asked if we desired anything. We told him how once we had been at school on that very spot, and were trying to make out the old trees that served as bases in "la balle au camp," and that if we really desired anything just then it was that we might become school-boys once more!

"Ah, ma foi! je comprends ça, messieurs—moi aussi, j'ai été écolier, et j'aimais bien la balle au camp," said the good old man, who had been a soldier.

He informed us the family were away, but that if we liked to come

inside and see the garden he was sure his master would have no objection. We jumped at this kind offer and spent quite an hour there, and if I were Barty I could so describe the emotions of that hour that the reader would feel quite as tearfully grateful to me as to Barty Josselin for Chapters III. and IV. in *Le Fil de la Vierge*, which are really founded, *mutatis mutandis*, on this self-same little adventure of ours.

Nothing remained of our old school—not even the outer walls; nothing but the big trees and the absolute ground they grew out of. Beautiful lawns, flower-beds, conservatories, summer-houses, ferns, and evergreen shrubs made the place seem even larger than it had once been—the very reverse of what usually happens—and softened for us the disenchantment of the change.

Here, at least was no desecration of a hallowed spot. Where the past has been dead and buried a long while ago there is no sweeter decking for its grave than a rich autumn tangle, all yellow and brown and pale and hectic red, with glossy evergreens, and soft, damp moss to keep up the illusion of spring and summer all the year round.

Much to the amusement of the old concierge and his wife, Barty insisted on climbing into a huge horse-chestnut tree, in which was a natural seat, very high up, where, well hidden by the dense foliage, he and I used to colour pipes for boys who couldn't smoke without feeling sick.

Nothing would suit him now but that he must smoke a pipe there while we talked to the good old couple below.

"Moi aussi, je fumais quand c'était défendu; que voulez-vous? Il faut bien que jeunesse se passe, n'est-ce pas?" said the old soldier.

"Ah, dame!" said his old wife, and sighed.

Every tree in this enchanted place had its history—every corner, every square yard of soil. I will not inflict these histories on the reader; I will restrain myself with all my might, and merely state that just as the old school had been replaced by this noble dwelling, the noble dwelling itself has been replaced, trees and garden and all, by a stately palace many stories high, which rears itself among so many other stately palaces that I can't even identify the spot where once stood the Institution F. Brossard!

Later, Barty made me solemnly pledge my word that if he and Leah should predecease me I would see to their due cremating and the final mingling of their ashes; that a portion of these—say half—should be set apart to be scattered on French soil, in places he would indicate in his will, and that the lion's share of that half should be sprinkled over the ground that once was our playground, with—or without—the legitimate owner's permission.

(Alas! and ah me! These instructions would have been carried out to the letter but that the place itself is no more; and, with a conviction that I should be merely acting just as they would have wished, I took it on myself to mingle with their ashes those of a very sweet and darling child of theirs, dearer to them and to me and to us all

than any creature ever born into this cruel universe; and I scattered a portion of these precious remains to the four winds, close by the old spot we so loved.)

* * * * *

Yes, that was a memorable holiday; the charming fête de St. Cloud was in full swing—it was delightful to haunt it once more with those dear young people so little dreamt of when Barty and I first got into scrapes there, and were duly punished by Latin verbs to conjugate in our best handwriting for Bonzig or Dumollard.

Then he and I would explore the so changed Bois de Boulogne for the little "Mare aux Biches," where his father had fallen under the sword of Lieutenant Rondelys; but we never managed to find it: perhaps it had evaporated; perhaps the does had drunk it all up, before they, too, had been made to vanish, before the German invader—or inside him; for he was fond of French venison, as well as of French clocks! He was a most omnivorous person.

Then Paris had endless charms for us both, and we relieved ourselves at last of that long homesickness of years, and could almost believe we were boys again, as we dived into such old and well-remembered streets as yet remained.

There were still some slums we had loved; one or two of them exist even now. Only the other day I saw the Rue de Cléry, the Rue de la Lunc, the Rue de la Montagne—all three on the south side of the Boulevard Bonne Nouvelle: they are still terrible to look at from the genial Boulevard, even by broad daylight—the houses so tall, so irregular, the streets so narrow and winding and black. They seemed to us boys terrible, indeed, between eight and nine on a winter's evening, with just a lamp here and there to make their darkness visible. Whither they led I can't say; we never dared explore their obscure and mysterious recesses. They may have ended in the *cour des miracles* for all we knew—it was nearly fifty years ago—and they may be quite virtuous abodes of poverty to-day; but they seemed to us then strange, labyrinthine abysses of crime and secret dens of infamy, where dreadful deeds were done in the dead of long winter nights. Evidently, to us in those days, whoever should lose himself there would never see the daylight again; so we loved to visit them after dark, with our hearts in our mouths, before going back to school.

We would sit on posts within call of the cheerful Boulevard, and watch mysterious women hurry up and down in the cold, out of darkness into light and back again, poor creatures—dingy moths, silent but ominous night-jars, forlorn women of the town—ill-favoured and ill-dressed, some of them all but middle-aged, in common caps and aprons, with cotton umbrellas, like cooks looking for a situation.

They never spoke to us, and seemed to be often brutally repulsed by whatever men they did speak to—mostly men in blouses.

"Ô dis-donc, *Hôrtense*! qu'y fait froid! quand donc qu'y s'ra ônze heures, q'nous allions nous *couûcher*?"

So said one of them to another one cold, drizzly night, in a raucous voice, with low intonations of the gutter. The dimly-felt horror and despair and pathos of it sent us away shivering to our Passy omnibus as fast as our legs could carry us.

That phrase has stuck in my memory ever since. Thank heaven! the eleventh hour must have struck long ago, and Hortense and her friend must be fast asleep and well out of the cold by now—they need walk those evil streets no more. . . .

When we had exhausted it all, and we felt homesick for England again, it was good to get back to Marsfield, high up over the Thames—so beautiful in its rich October colours which the river reflected—with its old trees that grew down to the water's edge, and brooded by the boat-house there in the mellow sunshine.

And then again when it became cold and dreary at Christmas-time there was my big house at Lancaster Gate, where Josselins were fond of spending some of the winter months, and where I managed to find room for them all—with a little squeezing during the Christmas holidays when the boys came home from school. What good times they were!

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"On May 24th, at Marsfield, Berks, the wife of Bartholomew Josselin, of a daughter"—or as Leah put it in her diary, "our seventh daughter and ninth child—to be called *Martia*, or *Marty* for short."

It seems that Marty, prepared by her first ablution for this life, and as she lay being powdered on Mrs. Jones's motherly lap, was of a different type to her predecessors—much whiter, and lighter, and slighter; and she made no exhibition of that lusty lung-power which had so characterised the other little Barties on their introduction to this vale of tears.

Her face was more regularly formed and more highly finished, and in a few weeks grew of a beauty so solemn and pathetic that it would sometimes make Mrs. Jones, who had lost babies of her own, shed motherly tears merely to look at her.

Even I felt sentimental about the child; and as for Barty, he could talk of nothing else, and made those rough and hasty silver-point studies of her head and face—mere sketches—which, being full of obvious faults, became so quickly famous among æsthetic and exclusive people who had long given up Barty as a writer on account of his scandalous popularity.

Alas! even those silver-points have become popular now, and their photogravures are in the shop windows of sea-side resorts and in the back parlours of the lower middle-class; so that the æsthetic exclusives who are up to date have had to give up Barty altogether. No one is sacred in these days—not even Shakespeare and Michael Angelo.

We shall be hearing Schumann and Wagner on the piano-organ, and "*nous autres*" of the cultured classes will have to fall back on Balfe and Byron and Landseer.

In a few months little Marty became famous for this extra beauty all over Henley and Maidenhead.

She soon grew to be the idol of her father's heart, and her mother's, and Ida's. But I really think that if there was one person who idolised her more than the rest, it was I, Bob Maurice.

She was extremely delicate, and gave us much anxiety and many alarms, and Dr. Knight was a very constant visitor at Marsfield Lodge. It was fortunate, for her sake, that the Josselins had left Campden Hill and made their home in Marsfield.

Nine of these children—including one not yet born then—developed there into the finest and completest human beings, take them for all in all, that I have ever known, nine—a good number!

"Numero Deus impare gaudet."

Or, as poor Rapaud translated this (and was pinched black and blue by Père Brossard in consequence)—

"Le numéro deux se réjouit d'être impair!" (Number two takes a pleasure in being odd!)

The three sons—one of them now in the army, as becomes a Rohan; and one a sailor, as becomes a Josselin; and one a famous actor, the true Josselin of all—are the very types of what I should like for the fathers of my grandchildren, if I had marriageable daughters of my own.

And as for Barty's daughters, they are all—but one—so well known in society and the world—so famous, I may say—that I need hardly mention them here; all but Marty, my sweet little "maid of Dove."

When Barty took Marsfield he and I had entered what I have ever since considered the happiest decade of a successful and healthy man's life—the forties.

"Wait until you get to *forty year*!"

So sang Thackeray, but with a different experience to mine. He seemed to look upon the fifth decade as the grave of all tender illusions and emotions, and exult!

My tender illusions and emotions became realities—things to live by and for. As Barty and I "dipped our noses in the Gascon wine"—Vougeot-Conti & Co.—I blessed my stars for being free of Marsfield, which was, and still is, my real home, and for the warm friendship of its inhabitants who have been my real family, and for several years of unclouded happiness all round.

Even in winter what a joy it was, after a long solitary walk, or ride, or drive, or railway journey, to suddenly find myself at dusk in the midst of all that warmth and light and gaiety; what a contrast to the House of Commons; what a relief after Barge Yard or Downing Street; what tea that was, what crumpets and buttered toast, what a cigarette; what romps and jokes, and really jolly good fun; and all that delightful untaught music that afterwards became so cultivated!

Music was a special inherited gift of the entire family, and no trouble or expense was ever spared to make the best and the most of it.

Roberta became the most finished and charming amateur pianist



"ZE BRINCESS WOULD BE SO JARMT"

I have ever heard, and as for *Mary la rossignolle*—Mrs. Trevor—she's almost as famous as if she had made singing her profession, as she once so wished to do. She married happily instead, a better profession still; and though her songs are as highly paid for as any—

except perhaps, Madame Patti's—every penny goes to the poor. She can make a nigger melody sound worthy of Schubert, and a song of Schumann go down with the common herd as if it were a nigger melody, and obtain a genuine encore for it from quite simple people.

Why, only the other night she and her husband dined with me at the Bristol, and we went to Baron Schwartzkind's in Piccadilly to meet Royal Highnesses.

Up comes the Baron with—

"Äch, Mrs. Drefor! vill you not zing zomzing? ze BrinCESS would be so jarmt."

"I'll sing as much as you like, Baron, if you promise me you'll send a cheque for £50 to the Foundling Hospital to-morrow morning," says Mary.

"I'll send *another* fifty, Baron," says Bob Maurice. And the Baron had to comply, and Mary sang again and again, and the Princess was more than charmed.

She declared herself enchanted, and yet it was Brahms and Schumann that Mary sang; no pretty little English ballad, no French, no Italian.

"Aus meinen Thränen spricssen
Viel' blühende Blumen hervor;
Und meine Seufze werden
Ein Nachtigallen Chor. . . ."

So sang Mary, and I declare that some of the royal eyes were moist.

They all sang and played, these Josselins; and tumbled and acted, and were droll and original and fetching, as their father had been and was still; and, like him, amiable and full of exuberant life; and, like their mother, kind and appreciative and sympathetic and ever thoughtful of others, without a grain of selfishness or conceit.

They were also great athletes, boys and girls alike; good swimmers and riders, and first-rate oars. And though not as good at books and lessons as they might have been, they did not absolutely disgrace themselves, being so quick and intelligent.

Amid all this geniality and liveliness at home, and this beauty of surrounding nature abroad, little Marty seemed to outgrow in a measure her constitutional delicacy.

It was her ambition to become as athletic as a boy, and she was persevering in all physical exercises—and threw stones very straight and far, with a quite easy masculine sweep of the arm; I taught her myself.

It was also her ambition to draw, and she would sit for an hour or more on a high chair by her father, or on the arm of his chair, and watch him at his work in silence. Then she would get herself paper and pencil, and try and do likewise; but discouragement would overtake her, and she would have to give it up in despair, with a heavy sigh and a clouded look on her lovely little face; and yet they were surprisingly clever, these attempts of hers.

Then she took to dictating a novel to her sisters and to me: it was all about an immense dog and three naughty boys, who were awful dunces at school and ran away to sea, dog and all; and performed heroic deeds in Central Africa, and grew up there, "booted and bearded, and burnt to a brick!" and never married or fell in love, or stooped to any nonsense of that kind.

This novel, begun in the handwriting of all of us, and continued in her own, remained unfinished; and the precious MS. is now in my possession. I have read it oftener than any novel, French or English, except, perhaps, *Vanity Fair*!

I may say that I had something to do with the development of her literary faculty, as I read many good books to her before she could read quite comfortably for herself: *Evenings at Home*, *The Swiss Family Robinson*, *Gulliver*, *Robinson Crusoe*, books by Ballantyne, Marryat, Mayne Reid, Jules Verne, &c., and *Treasure Island*, *Tom Swayer*, *Hucklebury Finn*, *The Wreck of the Grosvenor*, and then her father's books, or some of them.

But even better than her famous novel were the stories she improvised to me in a small boat which I often rowed up-stream while she steered—one story in particular, that had no end; she would take it up at any time.

She had imagined a world where all trees and flowers and vegetation (and some birds) were the size they are now; but men and beasts no bigger than Lilliputians, with houses and churches and buildings to match—and a family called Josselin living in a beautiful house called Marsfield, as big as a piano-organ.

Endless were the adventures by flood and field of these little people: in the huge forest and on the gigantic river, which it took them nearly an hour to cross in a steam-launch when the wind was high, or riding trained carrier-pigeons to distant countries, and the coasts of Normandy, Brittany, and Picardy where everything was on a similar scale.

It would astonish me to find how vivid and real she could make these imaginations of hers, and to me how fascinating—oddly enough, she reserved them for me only, and told no one else.

There was always an immensely strong man, one Bobby Maurice, a good-natured giant, nearly three inches in height and over two ounces in weight, who among other feats would eat a whole pea at a sitting, and hold out an acorn at arm's length, and throw a peppercorn over two yards—which has remained the record.

Then, coming back down-stream, she would take the sculls and I the tiller, and I would tell her (in French) all about our school adventures at Brossard's, and Bonzig, and the Lafertés, and the Revolution of February; and in that way she picked up a lot of useful and idiomatic Parisian which considerably astonished Fräulein Werner, the German governess, who yet knew French almost as well as her own language—almost as well as Mr. Ollendorff himself.

She also changed one of the heroes in her famous novel, *Tommy Holt*, into a French boy, and called him *Rapaud*!

She was even more devoted to animals than the rest of the family: the beautiful Angora, Kitty, died when Marty was five, from an abscess in her cheek, where she'd been bitten by a strange bull-terrier: and Marty tearfully wrote her epitaph in a beautiful round hand—

"Here lies Kitty, full of grace;
Died of an *abbess* in her face!"

This was her first attempt at verse-making, and here's her last, from the French of Sully-Prudhomme—

"If you but knew what tears, alas!
One weeps for kinship unbested,
In pity you would sometimes pass
My poor abode!"

If you but knew what balm, for all
Despond, lies in an angel's glance,
Your looks would on my window fall
As though by chance!

If you but knew the heart's delight
To feel its fellow-heart is by,
You'd linger, as a sister might,
These gates anigh!

If you but knew how oft I yearn
For one sweet voice, one presence dear,
Perhaps you'd even simply turn
And enter here!"

She was only just seventeen when she wrote them, and, upon my word, I think they are almost as good as the original!

Her intimate friendship with Chucker-out, huge St. Bernard, lasted for nearly both their lives, alas! It began when they both weighed exactly the same, and I could carry both in one arm. When he died he turned the scale at sixteen stone, like me.

It has lately become the fashion to paint big dogs and little girls, and engravings of these pictures are to be seen in all the printsellers' shops. It always touches me very much to look at these works of art, although—and I hope it is not libellous to say so—the big dog is always hopelessly inferior in beauty and dignity and charm to Chucker-out, who was champion of his day. And as for the little girls—*Ah, mon Dieu!*

Such pictures are not high art of course, and that is why I don't possess one, as I've got an æsthetic character to keep up; but why they shouldn't be I can't guess. Is it because no high artist—except Briton Riviere—will stoop to so easily understood a subject?

A great master would not be above painting a small child or a big dog separately—why should he be above putting them both in the same picture? It would be too obvious, I suppose—like a melody by Mozart, or Handel's "Harmonious Blacksmith," or Schubert's Serenade, and other catchpenny tunes of the same description.

I was also very intimate with Chucker-out, who made more of me than he even did of his master.

One night I got very late to Marsfield by the last train, and, letting myself in with my key, I found Chucker-out waiting for me in the hall, and apparently in a very anxious frame of mind, and extremely demonstrative, wanting to say something more than usual—to confide a trouble, to confess!

We went up into the big music-room, which was still lighted, and lay on a couch together; he, with his head on my knees, whimpering softly as I smoked and read a paper.

Presently Leah came in and said—

“Such an unfortunate thing has happened; Marty and Chucker-out were playing on the slope, and he knocked her down and sprained her knee.”

As soon as Chucker-out heard Marty’s name he sat up and whined piteously, and pawed me down with great violence; pawed three buttons off my waistcoat and broke my watch-chain—couldn’t be comforted! the misadventure had been preying on his mind for hours.

I give this subject to Mr. Briton Riviere, who can paint both dogs and children, and everything else he likes. I will sit for him myself, if he wishes, and as a Catholic priest! He might call it a confession—and an absolution! or, “The Secrets of the Confessional.”

The good dog became more careful in the future, and restrained his exuberance even going downstairs with Marty on the way to a ramble in the woods, which excited him more than anything else; if he came downstairs with anybody else, the violence of his joy was such that one had to hold on by the banisters. He was a dear, good beast, and a splendid body-guard for Marty in her solitary woodland rambles—never left her side for a second. I have often watched him from a distance, unbeknown to both; he was proud of his responsibility—almost fussy about it.

I have been fond of many dogs, but never yet loved a dog as I loved big Chucker-out—or *Choucroûte*, as Coralie, the French maid, called him, to Fräulein Werner’s annoyance (*Choucroûte* is French for Sauerkraut); and I like to remember him in his splendid prime, guarding his sweet little mistress, whom I loved better than anything else on earth. She was to me a kind of pet Marjorie, and said such droll and touching things that I could almost fill a book with them. I kept a diary on purpose, and called it *Martiana*.

She was tall, but lamentably thin and slight, poor dear, with her mother’s piercing black eyes and the very fair curly locks of her papa—a curious and most effective contrast—and features and a complexion of such extraordinary delicacy and loveliness that it almost gave one pain in the midst of the keen pleasure one had in the mere looking at her.

Heavens! how that face would light up suddenly at catching the unexpected sight of some one she was fond of! How often it has lighted up at the unexpected sight of “Uncle Bob”! The mere

remembrance of that sweet illumination brightens my old age for me now; and I could almost wish her back again, in my senile selfishness and inconsistency. Paziienza!

Sometimes she was quite embarrassing in her simplicity, and reminded me of her father.

Once in Dieppe—when she was about eight—she and I had gone through the *Établissement* to bathe and people had stared at her even more than usual and whispered to each other.

"I bet you don't know why they all stare so, Uncle Bob?"

"I give it up," said I.

"It's because I'm so *handsome*—we're *all* handsome, you know, and I'm the handsomest of the lot, it seems! *You're not* handsome, Uncle Bob. But oh! aren't you *strong*! Why, you could tuck a piou-piou under one arm and a postman under the other, and walk up to the castle with them and pitch them into the sea, *couldn't* you? And that's better than being handsome, *isn't* it? I wish I was like that."

And here she cuddled and kissed my hand.

When Mary began to sing (under Signor R.), it was her custom of an afternoon to lock herself up alone with a tuning-fork in a large garret and practise, as she was shy of singing exercises before anyone else.

Her voice, even practising scales, would give Marty extraordinary pleasure, and me too. Marty and I have often sat outside and listened to Mary's rich and fluent vocalisings; and I hoped Marty would develop a great voice also, as she was so like Mary in face and disposition, except that Mary's eyes were blue and her hair very black and her health unexceptionable.

Marty did not develop a real voice, although she sang very prettily and confidentially to me, and worked hard at the piano with Roberta; she learned harmony and composed little songs, and wrote words to them, and Mary or her father would sing them to her and make her happy beyond description.

Happy! she was always happy during the first few years of her life—from five or six to twelve.

I like to think her happiness was so great for this brief period, that she had her full share of human felicity just as if she had lived to the age of the Psalmist.

It seemed everybody's business at Marsfield to see that Marty had a good time. This was an easy task as she was so easy to amuse; and when amused, herself so amusing to others.

As for me, it is hardly too much to say that every hour I could spare from business and the cares of state was spent in organising the amusement of little Marty Josselin, and I was foolish enough to be almost jealous of her own father and mother's devotion to the same object.

Unlike her brothers and sisters, she was a studious little person, and fond of books—too much so indeed, for all she was such a tom-boy; and all this amusement was designed by us with the purpose of

winning her away from the too sedulous pursuit of knowledge. I may add that in temper and sweetness of disposition the child was simply angelic, and could not be spoiled by any spoiling.

It was during these happy years at Marsfield that Barty, although bereft of his Martia ever since that farewell letter, managed, nevertheless, to do his best work, on lines previously laid down for him by her.

For the first year or two he missed the feeling of the north almost painfully—it was like the loss of a sense—but he grew in time accustomed to the privation, and quite resigned; and Marty, whom he worshipped—as did her mother—compensated him for the loss of his demon.

Inaccessible Heights, Floréal et Fructidor, The Infinitely Little, The Northern Pactolus, Pandore et sa Boîte, Cancer and Capricorn, Phæbus et Séléné followed each other in leisurely succession. And he also found time for those controversies that so moved and amused the world; among others, his famous and triumphant confutation of Canon —, on one hand, and Professor —, the famous scientist, on the other, which has been compared to the classic litigation about the oyster, since the oyster itself fell to Barty's share, and a shell to each of the two disputants.

Orthodox and agnostic are as the poles asunder, yet they could not but both agree with Barty Josselin, who so cleverly extended a hand to each, and acted as a conductor between them.

That irresistible optimism which so forces itself upon all Josselin's readers, who number by now half the world, and will probably one day include the whole of it—when the whole of it is civilised—belonged to him by nature, by virtue of his health and his magnificent physique and his happy circumstances, and an admirably-balanced mind, which was better fitted for his particular work and for the world's good than any special gift of genius in one direction.

His literary and artistic work never cost him the slightest effort. It amused him to draw and write more than did anything else in the world, and he always took great pains, and delighted in taking them; but himself he never took seriously for one moment—never realised what happiness he gave, and was quite unconscious of the true value of all he thought and wrought and taught!

He laughed good-humouredly at the passionate praise that for thirty years was poured upon him from all quarters of the globe, and shrugged his shoulders at the coarse invective of those whose religious susceptibilities he had so innocently wounded; left all published insults unanswered; never noticed any lie printed about himself—never wrote a paragraph in explanation or self-defence, but smoked many pipes and mildly wondered.

Indeed he was mildly wondering all his life: at his luck—at all the ease and success and warm domestic bliss that had so compensated him for the loss of his left eye, and would almost have compensated him for the loss of both.

"It's all because I'm so deuced good-looking!" says Barty—"and so's Leah!"

And all his life he sorrowed for those who were less fortunate than himself. His charities and those of his wife were immense—he gave all the money, and she took all the trouble.

"C'est papa qui paie et maman qui régle," as Marty would say; and never were funds distributed more wisely.

But often at odd moments the Weltschmerz, the sorrow of the world would pierce this man who no longer felt sorrows of his own—stab him through and through—bring the sweat to his temples—fill his eyes with that strange pity and trouble that moved you so deeply when you caught the look; and soon the complicated anguish of that dim regard would resolve itself into gleams of a quite celestial sweetness—and a heavenly message would go forth to mankind in such simple words that all might read who ran. . . .

All these endowments of the heart and brain, which in him were masculine and active, were possessed in a passive form by his wife; instead of the buoyant energy and boisterous high spirits, she had patience and persistency that one felt to be indomitable, and a silent sympathy that never failed, and a fund of cheerfulness and good sense on which any call might be made by life without fear of bankruptcy; she was one of those who could play a losing game and help others to play it—and she never had a losing game to play!

These gifts were inherited by their children, who, moreover, were so fed on their father's books—so imbued with them—that one felt sure of their courage, endurance, and virtue, whatever misfortunes or temptations might assail them in this life.

One felt this especially with the youngest but one, Marty, who, with even more than her due share of those gifts of the head and heart they had all inherited from their two parents, had not inherited their splendid frames and invincible health.

Roderick, *alias* Mark Tapley, *alias* Chips, who is now the sailor, was, oddly enough, the strongest and the hardiest of the whole family, and yet he was born two years after Marty. She always declared she brought him up and made a man of him, and taught him how to throw stones, and how to row and ride and swim; and that it was entirely to her he owed it that he was worthy to be a sailor—her ideal profession for a man.

He was devoted to her, and a splendid little chap, and in the holidays he and she and I were inseparable, and of course Chucker-out, who went with us wherever it was—Hâvre, Dieppe, Dinard, the Highlands, Whitby, &c.

Once we were privileged to settle ourselves for two months in Castle Rohan, through the kindness of Lord Whitby; and that was the best holiday of all—for the young people especially. And more especially for Barty himself, who had such delightful boyish recollections of that delightful place, and found many old friends among the sailors and fisher people—who remembered him as a boy.

Chips and Marty and I and the faithful Chucker-out were never happier than on those staiths where there is always such an ancient and fishlike smell; we never tired of watching the miraculous draughts of silver herring being disentangled from the nets and counted into baskets, which were carried on the heads of the stalwart, scaly fishwomen, and packed with salt and ice in innumerable barrels for Billingsgate and other great markets; or else the sales by auction of huge cod and dark-grey dogfish as they lay helpless all of a row on the wet flags amid a crowd of sturdy mariners looking on, with their hands in their pockets and their pipes in their mouths.

Then over that restless little bridge to the picturesque old town, and through its long narrow street, and up the many stone steps to the ruined abbey and the old church on the East Cliff; and the old churchyard, where there are so many stones in memory of those who were lost at sea.

It was good to be there, in such good company, on a sunny August morning, and look around and about and down below: the miles and miles of purple moor, the woods of Castle Rohan, the wide North Sea, which turns such a heavenly blue beneath a cloudless sky; the two stone piers, with each its lighthouse, and little people patiently looking across the waves for Heaven knows what! the busy harbour full of life and animation; under our feet the red roofs of the old town and the little clock tower of the market-place; across the stream the long quay with its ale-houses and emporiums and jet shops and lively traffic; its old gabled dwellings and their rotting wooden balconies. And rising out of all this, tier upon tier, up the opposite cliff, the Whitby of the visitors, dominated by a gigantic windmill that is—or was—almost as important a landmark as the old abbey itself.

To the south the shining river ebbs and flows, between its big shipbuilding yards and the railway to York, under endless moving craft and a forest of masts, now straight on end, now slanting helplessly on one side when there's not enough water to float their keels; and the long row of Cornish fishing smacks, two or three deep.

How the blue smoke of their cooking wreathes upward in savoury whiffs and whirls! They are good cooks, these rovers from Penzance, and do themselves well, and remind us that it is time to go and get lunch at the hotel.

We do, and do ourselves uncommonly well also; and afterwards we take a boat, we four (if the tide serves), and row up for a mile or so to a certain dam at Ruswarp, and there we take another boat on a lovely little secluded river, which is quite independent of tides, and where for a mile or more the trees bend over us from either side as we leisurely paddle along and watch the leaping salmon-trout, pulling now and then under a drooping ash or weeping-willow to gaze and dream or chat, or read out loud from *Sylvia's Lovers*; Sylvia Robson once lived in a little farm-house near Upgang, which we know well, and at Whitby every one reads about Sylvia Robson; or else we tell

stories, or inform each other what a jolly time we're having, and tease old Chucker-out, who gets quite excited, and we admire the discretion with which he disposes of his huge body as ballast to trim the boat, and remains perfectly still in spite of his excitement for fear he should upset us. Indeed, he has been learning all his life how to behave in boats, and how to get in and out of them.

And so on till tea-time at five, and we remember there's a little inn at Sleights, where the scones are good; or, better still, a leafy garden full of raspberry-bushes at Cock Mill, where they give excellent jam with your tea, and from which there are three ways of walking back to Whitby when there's not enough water to row—and which is the most delightful of those three ways has never been decided yet.

Then from the stone pier we watch a hundred brown-sailed Cornish fishing-smacks follow each other in single file across the harbour bar and go sailing out into the west as the sun goes down—a most beautiful sight, of which Marty feels all the mystery and the charm and the pathos, and Chips all the jollity and danger and romance.

Then to the trap, and home all four of us *au grand trot*, between the hedge-rows and through the splendid woods of Castle Rohan; there at last we find all the warmth and light and music and fun of Marsfield, and many good things besides: supper, dinner, tea—all in one; and happy, healthy, hungry, indefatigable boys and girls who've been trapezing over miles and miles of moor and fell, to beautiful mills and dells and waterfalls—too many miles for slender Marty or little Chips; or even Bob and Chucker-out—who weigh thirty-two stone between them, and are getting lazy in their old age, and fat and scant of breath.

Whitby is an ideal place for young people; it almost makes old people feel young themselves there when the young are about; there is so much to do.

I, being the eldest of the large party, chummed most of the time with the two youngest and became a boy again; so much so that I felt myself almost a sneak when I tactfully tried to restrain such exuberance of spirits on their part as might have led them into mischief: indeed it was difficult not to lead them into mischief; all the old inventiveness (that had got me and others into so many scrapes at Brossard's) seemed to come back, enhanced by experience and maturity.

At all events, Marty and Chips were happier with me than without—of that I feel sure, for I tested it in many ways.

I always took immense pains to devise the kinds of excursion that would please them best, and these never seemed to fail of their object; and I was provident and well skilled in all details of the commissariat (Chips was healthily alimentative); I was a very *Bradshaw* at trains and times and distances, and also, if I am not bragging too much, and making myself out an Admirable Crichton, extremely weatherwise, and good at carrying small people pickaback when they got tired.

Marty was well up in local folk-lore, and had mastered the history of Whitby and St. Hilda, and Sylvia Robson; and of the old obsolete whaling-trade, in which she took a passionate interest; and fixed poor little Chip's mind with a passion for the polar regions (he is now on the coast of Senegambia).

We were much on the open sea ourselves, in cobbles; sometimes the big dog with us—"Joomboa," as the fisherman called him; and they marvelled at his good manners and stately immobility in a boat.

One afternoon—a perfect afternoon—we took tea at Runswick, from which charming little village the Whitbys take their second title, and had ourselves rowed round the cliffs to Staithes, which we reached just before sunset; Chips and his sister also taking an oar between them, and I another. There, on the brink of the little bay, with the singularly quaint and picturesque old village behind it, were fifty fishing-boats side by side waiting to be launched, and all the fishing population of Staithes were there to launch them—men, women, and children; as we landed we were immediately pressed into the service.

Marty and Chips, wild with enthusiasm, pushed and yo-ho'd with the best; and I also won some commendation by my hearty efforts in the common cause. Soon the coast was clear of all but old men and boys, women and children, and our four selves; and the boats all sailed westward, in a cluster, and lost themselves in the golden haze. It was the prettiest sight I ever saw, and we were all quite romantic about it.

Chucker-out held a small court on the sands, and was worshipped and fed with stale fish by a crowd of good-looking and agreeable little lasses and lads who called him "Joomboa," and pressed Chips and Marty for biographical details about him, and were not disappointed. And I smoked a pipe of pipes with some splendid old salts, and shared my Honeydew among them.

Nous étions bien, là!

So sped those happy weeks—with something new and exciting every day—even on rainy days, when we wore waterproofs and big indiarubber boots and sou'westers, and Chucker-out's coat got so heavy with the soak that he could hardly drag himself along: and we settled, we three at least, that we would never go to France or Scotland—never any more—never anywhere in the world but Whitby, jolly Whitby—

Ah me! l'homme propose. . . .

Marty always wore a red woollen fisherman's cap that hung down behind over the waving masses of her long, thick yellow hair—a blue jersey of the elaborate kind women knit on the Whitby quay—a short, striped petticoat like a Boulogne fisherwife's, and light brown stockings on her long, thin legs.

I have a photograph of her like that, holding a shrimping net; with a magnifying-glass, I can see the little high-light in the middle of each jet-black eye—and every detail and charm and perfection of

her childish face. Of all the art-treasures I've amassed in my long life, that is to me the most beautiful, far and away—but I can't look at it yet for more than a second at a time . . .

"O tempo passato, perchè non ritorni?"

As Mary is so fond of singing to me sometimes, when she thinks I've got the blues. As if I haven't always got the blues!

All Barty's teaching is thrown away on me, now that he's not here himself to point his moral—

"Et je m'en vais
Au vent mauvais
Qui m' emporte
Deçà delà,
Pareil à la
Feuille morte . . ."

Heaven bless thee, Mary dear, rossignolet de mon âme! Would thou wert ever by my side! fain would I keep thee for myself in a golden cage, and feed thee on the tongues of other nightingales, so thou mightst warble every day, and all day long. By some strange congenital mystery, the native tuning of thy voice is such, for me, that all the pleasure of my past years seems to go for ever ringing in every single note. Thy dear mother speaks again, thy gay young father rollicks and jokes and sings, and little Marty laughs her happy laugh.

Da capo, e da capo, Mary—only at night shouldst thou cease from thy sweet pipings, that I might smoke myself to sleep, and dream that all is once more as it used to be.

The writing, such as it is, of this life of Barty Josselin—which always means the writing of so much of my own—has been to me, up to the present moment, a great source of consolation, almost of delight, when the pen was in my hand and I dived into the past.

But now the story becomes such a record of my own personal grief that I have scarcely the courage to go on; I will get through it as quickly as I can.

It was at the beginning of the present decade that the bitter thing arose—*medio de fonte leporum*; just as all seemed so happy and secure at Marsfield.

One afternoon in May I arrived at the house, and nobody was at home; but I was told that Marty was in the wood with old Chucker-out, and I went thither to find her, loudly whistling a bar which served as a rallying signal to the family. It was not answered, but after a long hunt I found Marty lying on the ground at the foot of a tree, and Chucker-out licking her face and hands.

She had been crying and seemed half unconscious.

When I spoke to her she opened her eyes and said—

"O Uncle Bob, I have hurt myself so! I fell down that tree. Do you think you could carry me home?"

Beside myself with terror and anxiety, I took her up as gently as I could, and made my way to the house. She had hurt the base of her spine as she fell on the roots of the tree; but she seemed to get better as soon as Sparrow, the nurse, had undressed her and put her to bed.

I sent for the doctor, however, and he thought, after seeing her, that I should do well to send for Dr. Knight.

Just then Leah and Barty came in, and we telegraphed for Dr. Knight, who came at once.

Next day Dr. Knight thought we had better have Sir ———, and there was a consultation.

Marty kept her bed for two or three days, and then seemed to have completely recovered but for a slight internal disturbance, brought on by the concussion, and which did not improve.

One day Dr. Knight told me he feared very much that this would end in a kind of ataxia of the lower limbs—it might be sooner or later; indeed, it was Sir ———'s opinion that it would be sure to do so in the end—that spinal paralysis would set in, and that the child would become a cripple for life, and for a life that would not be long.

I had to tell this to her father and mother.

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Marty, however, recovered all her high spirits. It was as if nothing had happened or could happen, and during six months everything at Marsfield went on as usual but for the sickening fear that we three managed to conceal in our hearts, even from each other.

At length, one day as Marty and I were playing lawn-tennis, she suddenly told me that her feet felt as if they were made of lead, and I knew that the terrible thing had come. . . .

I must really pass over the next few months.

In the summer of the following year she could scarcely walk without assistance, and soon she had to go about in a Bath-chair.

Soon, also, she ceased to be conscious when her lower limbs were pinched and pricked till an interval of about a second had elapsed, and this interval increased every month. She had no natural consciousness of her legs and feet whatever unless she saw them, although she could move them still, and even get in and out of bed, or in and out of her Bath-chair, without much assistance, so long as she could see her lower limbs. Often she would stumble and fall down, even on a grassy lawn. In the dark she could not control her movements at all.

She was also in constant pain, and her face took on permanently the expression that Barty's often wore when he thought he was going blind in Malines, although, like him in those days, she was lively and droll, in spite of this heavy misfortune, which seemed to break every heart at Marsfield except her own.

For, alas! Barty Josselin, who has so lightened for us the sorrow of mere bereavement, and made quick-coming death a little thing—

for some of us, indeed, a lovely thing—has not taught us how to bear the sufferings of those we love, the woeful ache of pity for pangs we are powerless to relieve and can only try to share.

Endeavour as I will, I find I cannot tell this part of my story as it should be told; it should be a beautiful story of sweet young feminine fortitude and heroic resignation—an angel's story.

During the four years that Marty's illness lasted the only comfort I could find in life was to be with her—reading to her, teaching her Blaze, rowing her on the river, driving her, pushing or dragging her Bath-chair; but, alas! watching her fade day by day.

Strangely enough, she grew to be the tallest of all her sisters, and the most beautiful in the face; she was so wasted and thin she could hardly be said to have had a body or limbs at all.

I think the greatest pleasure she had was to lie and be sung to by Mary or her father, or played to by Roberta, or chatted to about domestic matters by Leah, or read to by me. She took the keenest interest in everything that concerned us all; she lived out of herself entirely, and from day to day, taking short views of life.

It filled her with animation to see the people who came to the house and talk with them; and among these she made many passionately-devoted friends.

There were also poor children from the families of labourers in the neighbourhood, in whom she had always taken a warm interest. She now organised them into classes, and taught and amused them and told them stories, sang funny songs to them, and they grew to her an immense hobby and constant occupation.

She also became a quite surprising performer on the banjo, which her father had taught her when she was quite a little girl, and invented charming tunes and effects and modulations that had never been tried on that humble instrument before. She could have made a handsome living out of it, crippled as she was.

She seemed the busiest, drollest, and most contented person in Marsfield; she all but consoled us for the dreadful thing that had happened to herself, and laughingly pitied us for pitying her.

So much for the teaching of Barty Josselin, whose books she knew by heart, and constantly read and re-read.

And thus, in spite of all, the old, happy, resonant cheerfulness gradually found its way back to Marsfield, as though nothing had happened; and poor broken Marty, who had always been our idol, became our goddess, our prop and mainstay, the angel in the house, the person for everyone to tell their troubles to—little or big—their jokes, their good stories; there was never a laugh like hers, so charged with keen appreciation of the humorous thing, the relish of which would come back to her again and again at any time—even in the middle of the night when she could not always sleep for her pain; and she would laugh anew.

Ida Scatcherd and I, with good Nurse Sparrow to help, wished to take her to Italy—to Egypt—but she would not leave Marsfield,

unless it were to spend the winter months with all of us at Lancaster Gate, or the autumn in the Highlands, or on the coast of Normandy.

And indeed neither Barty nor Leah nor the rest could have got on without her; they would have had to come, too—brothers, sisters, young husbands, grandchildren, and all.

Never but once did she give way. It was one June evening, when I was reading to her some favourite short poems out of Browning's *Men and Women* on a small lawn surrounded with roses, and of which she was fond.

The rest of the family were on the river, except her father and



MARTY

mother, who were dressing to go and dine with some neighbours; for a wonder, as they seldom dined away from home.

The carriage drove up to the door to fetch them, and they came out on the lawn to wish us good-night.

Never had I been more struck with the splendour of Barty and his wife, now verging towards middle age, as they bent over to kiss their daughter, and he cut capers and cracked little jokes to make her laugh.

Leah's hair was somewhat grey and her magnificent figure somewhat matronly, but there were no other signs of autumn; her beautiful white skin was still as delicate as a baby's, her jet-black eyes as bright and full, her teeth just as they were thirty years back.

Tall as she was, her husband towered over her, the finest and handsomest man of his age I have ever seen. And Marty gazed after them with her heart in her eyes as they drove off.

"How splendid they are, Uncle Bob!"

Then she looked down at her own shrunken figure and limbs—her long, wasted legs, and her thin, slight feet, that were yet so beautifully shaped.

And, hiding her face in her hands, she began to cry—

"And I am their poor little daughter—oh dear, oh dear!"

She wept silently for a while, and I said nothing, but endured an agony such as I cannot describe.

Then she dried her eyes and smiled, and said—

"What a goose I am!" and, looking at me—

"O Uncle Bob! forgive me; I've made you very unhappy—it shall never happen again!"

Suddenly the spirit moved me to tell her the story of Martia.

Leah and Barty and I had often discussed whether she should be told this extraordinary thing, in which we never knew whether to believe or not, and which, if there was a possibility of its being true, concerned Martia so directly.

They settled that they would leave it entirely to me—to tell her or not, as my own instinct would prompt me, should the opportunity occur.

My instinct prompted me to do so now. I shall not forget that evening.

The full moon rose before the sun had quite set and I talked on and on. The others came in to dinner. She and I had some dinner brought to us out there, and on I talked—and she could scarcely eat for listening. I wrapped her well up, and lit pipe after pipe, and went on talking, and a nightingale sang, but quite unheard by Marty Josselin.

She did not even hear her sister Mary, whose voice went lightly up to heaven through the open window—

"Oh that we two were maying!"

And when we parted that night she thanked and kissed me so effusively I felt that I had been happily inspired.

"I believe every word of it's true; I know it, I feel it! Uncle Bob, you have changed my life; I have often desponded when nobody knew—but never again! Dear papa! Only think of him! As if any human being alive could write what he has written without help from above or outside. Of course it's all true; I sometimes think I can almost remember things. . . . I'm sure I can."

Barty and Leah were well pleased with me when they came home at night.

That Marty was doomed to an early death did not very much deeply distress them. It is astonishing how lightly they thought of death, these people for whom life seemed so full of joy; but that she should ever be conscious of the anguish of her lot while she lived was to them intolerable—a haunting preoccupation.

To me, a narrower and more selfish person, Marty had almost

become to me life itself—her calamity had made her mine for ever; and life without her had become a thing not to be conceived: her life was my life.

That life of hers was to be even shorter than we thought, and I love to think that what remained of it was made so smooth and sweet by what I told her that night.

I read all Martia's Blaze letters to her, and helped her to read them for herself, and so did Barty. She got to know them by heart—especially the last; she grew to talk as Martia wrote; she told me of strange dreams she had often had—dreams she had told Sparrow and her own brothers and sisters when she was a child—wondrous dreams, in their seeming confirmation of what seemed to us impossible. Her pains grew slighter and ceased.

And now her whole existence had become a dream—a tranquil, happy dream; it showed itself in her face, its transfigured, unearthly beauty—in her cheerful talk, her eager sympathy; a kind of heavenly pity she seemed to feel for those who had to go on living out their normal length of days. And always the old love of fun and frolic and pretty tunes.

Her father would make her laugh till she cried, and the same fount of tears would serve when Mary sang Brahms and Schubert and Lassen to her—and Roberta played Chopin and Schumann by the hour.

So she might have lived on for a few years—four or five—even ten. But she died at seventeen, of mere influenza, very quickly and without much pain. Her father and mother were by her bedside when her spirit passed away, and Dr. Knight, who had brought her into the world.

She woke from a gentle doze and raised her head, and called out in a clear voice—

"Barty—Leah—come to me, come!"

And fell back dead.

Barty bowed his head and face on her hand, and remained there as if asleep. It was Leah who drew her eyelids down.

An hour later Dr. Knight came to me, his face distorted with grief.

"It's all over?" I said.

"Yes, it's all over."

"And Leah?"

"Mrs. Josselin is with her husband. She's a noble woman; she seems to bear it well."

"And Barty?"

"Barty Josselin is no more."

